WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

BY

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN

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WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

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Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

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WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

I

INTRODUCTION

THE periods of history that are most interesting are those which have been lighted up by spiritual bonfires. As we read about such epochs we seem to feel the fires rekindling in our bosom. Through the identity of those historic flames with our own, we become aware of our portion in the past, and of our mission in the present. The names of the actors, to be sure, are changed; the names of the forces at work vary continually. Yet the substance of the story is ever the same; the fable deals with ourselves. And therefore that fable stirs the intimate embers in us. Here, within us, are those smothered and banked furnaces which the stride of History has left behind it,— the only now living part, the only real part and absolute remnant of the divine pageant.

There are some periods of great confla-

gration where a whole epoch is lighted up with one great flame of idea, which takes perhaps a few decades to arise, blaze, and fall; during which time it shows all men in its glare. Willy nilly they can be and are seen by this light and by no other. Willy nilly their chief interest for the future lies in their relation to this idea. In spite of themselves they are thrilling, illustrative figures, seen in lurid and logical distortion, — abstracts and epitomes of human life. Nay, they stand forever as creatures that have been caught and held, cracked open, thrown living upon a screen, burned alive perhaps by a searching and terrible bonfire and recorded in the act,—as the citizens of Pompeii were recorded by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

It happened that a period of this kind passed over the United States between the years 1830 and 1865. There is nothing to be found in that epoch which does not draw its significance, its interest, its permanent power from the slavery question. There is no man whose life falls within that epoch whose character was not controlled by that question, or whose portrait can be seen by any other light than the light of that fire. Subtract that light and you have darkness;

you cannot see the man at all. In the biographies of certain distinguished conservatives of that time you may often observe the softening of the portrait by the omission of unpleasant records, the omission by the biographers of those test judgments and test ordeals with which the times were well supplied. By these omissions the man vanishes from the page of his own book. The page grows suddenly blank. You check yourself and wonder who it was that you were reading about. Now the reason of this disappearance of the leading character from your mind is that the biographer has drawn someone who *could* not have existed. The man must have answered aye or nay to the question which the times were putting. And, in fact, he did so answer. By this answer he could have been seen. Without it he does not exist.

I confess that I had rather stand out for posterity in a hideous silhouette, as having been wrong on every question of my time, than be erased into a cypher by my biographer. But biographers do not feel in this way toward their heroes. Each one feels that he has undertaken to do his best by his patron. Therefore they stand the man under a north light in a photographer's attic,

suggest his attitude, and thus take the picture; — whereas, in real life, the man was standing on the balcony of a burning building which the next moment collapsed, and in it he was crushed beyond the semblance of humanity. The Civil War,— that war with its years of interminable length, its battles of such successive and monstrous carnage, its dragged-out reiterations of horror and agony, and its even worse tortures of hope deferred,— hope all but extinct,— that war of which it is impossible to read even a summary without becoming so worn out by distress that you forget everything that went before in the country's history and emerge, as it were, a new man at the close of your perusal; — that war was no accident. It was involved in every syllable which every inhabitant of America uttered or neglected to utter in regard to the slavery question between 1830 and 1860. The gathering and coming on of that war, its vaporous distillation from the breath of every man, its slow, inevitable formation in the sky, its retreats and apparent dispersals, its renewed visibilities,— all of them governed by some inscrutable logic,— and its final descent in lightning and deluge; — these matters make the history of the interval be-

tween 1830 and 1865. That history is all one galvanic throb, one course of human passion, one Nemesis, one deliverance. And with the assassination of Lincoln in 1865 there falls from on high the great, unifying stroke that leaves the tragedy sublime. No poet ever invented such a scheme of curse, so all-involving, so remotely rising in an obscure past and holding an entire nation in its mysterious bondage,— a scheme based on natural law, led forward and unfolded from mood to mood, from climax to climax, and plunging at the close into the depths of a fathomless pity. The action of the drama is upon such a scale that a quarter of the earth has to be devoted to it. Yet the argument is so trite that it will hardly bear statement. Perhaps the true way to view the whole matter is to regard it as the throwing off by healthy morality of a little piece of left over wickedness,— that bad heritage of antiquity, domestic slavery. The logical and awful steps by which the process went forward merely exhibit familiar, moral, and poetic truth. What else could they exhibit?

We are ungrateful to the intellects of the past; or rather, like children we take it for granted that somebody must supply us with our supper and our ideas; and, for the most

part, it is difficult to discover the extent of our indebtedness, whether, for example, to Charlemagne or to the scholars who have revealed him. Yet everything we know and live by is due to the mind of someone in the past: its formulation, at any rate, was the act of a man.

These same illuminations of history that we have been speaking of were due to the enlightenment of individual minds. Our Revolution of 1776 was made interesting by its state papers, and to-day our knowledge of that time is a knowledge of the minds of Washington, Franklin, and the other patriots. Now the light by which we to-day see the Anti-slavery period was first shed on it by one man — William Lloyd Garrison. That slavery was wrong, everyone knew in his heart. The point seen by Garrison was the practical point that the slavery issue was the only thing worth thinking about, and that all else must be postponed till slavery was abolished. He saw this by a God-given act of vision in 1829; and it was true. The history of the spread of this idea of Garrison's is the history of the United States during the thirty years after it loomed in his mind. From the day Garrison established the *Lib-*

erator he was the strongest man in America. He was affected in his thought by no one. What he was thinking, all men were destined to think. How had he found that clew and skeleton-key to his age, which put him in possession of such terrible power? What he hurled in the air went everywhere and smote all men. Tide and tempest served him. His power of arousing uncontrollable disgust was a gift, like magic; and he seems to sail upon it as a demon upon the wind. Not Andrew Jackson, nor John Quincy Adams, nor Webster, nor Clay, nor Benton, nor Calhoun,— who dance like shadows about his machine,— but William Lloyd Garrison becomes the central figure in American life.

If one could see a mystical presentation of the epoch, one would see Garrison as a Titan, turning a giant grindstone or electrical power-wheel, from which radiated vibrations in larger and in ever larger, more communicative circles and spheres of agitation, till there was not a man, woman, or child in America who was not a-tremble.

We know, of course, that the source of these radiations was not in Garrison. They came from the infinite and passed out into the infinite. Had there been no Garrison

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through Garrison: he vitalized and perma
nently changed this nation as much as on
man ever did the same for any nation in th
history of the world.

II

THE BACK-GROUND

LET us consider the first fifty years of our national history. There was never a moment during this time when the slavery issue was not a sleeping serpent. That issue lay coiled up under the table during the deliberations of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. It was, owing to the invention of the cotton gin, more than half awake at the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803; and slavery was continued in the Louisiana territory by the terms of the treaty. Thereafter slavery was always in everyone's *mind*, though not always on his tongue. A slave state and a free state were, as a matter of practice, always admitted in pairs. Thus, Vermont and Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, Louisiana and Indiana, Mississippi and Illinois, had each been offset against the other. This was to preserve the balance of power. The whole country, however, was in a state of unstable equilibrium and

the era of good feeling oscillated upon the top of a craggy peak.

At last, in 1818-20, came two years of fierce, open struggle over slavery in the admission of Missouri, which state was formed from part of the Louisiana Purchase. Southern threats of disunion clashed with Northern taunts of defiance in the House of Representatives. In the outcome, the Missouri Compromise admitted Missouri *with slavery;* and prohibited slavery in that part of the Louisiana Purchase which lay north of the latitude of 36° 30′, except in the portion included in Missouri. This compromise became, in the public mind, as sacred as the Constitution itself; so that when, in 1854, the Compromise was repealed, the whole North felt that the bottom had dropped out of their government. The North believed itself to be betrayed. The savage feeling which led up to war developed rapidly at the North after this time. The war came as the final outcome of a great malady. But we must return to 1820.

During the decade that followed the Missouri Compromise everyone in America fell sick. It was not a sickness that kept men in bed. They went about their business,—the lawyer to court, the lady to pay calls, the

merchant to his wharf. The amusements, and the religious, literary, and educational occupations of mankind went forward as usual. But they all went forward under the gradually descending fringe of a mist, an unwholesome-feeling cloud of oppression. No one could say why it was that his food did not nourish him quite as it used to do, nor his unspoken philosophy of life any longer cover the needs of his nature. This was especially strange, because everybody ought to have been perfectly happy. Had not the country emerged from the War of the Revolution in the shape of a new and glorious Birth of Time,— a sample to all mankind? Had it not survived the dangers of the second war with Great Britain? And what then remained for us except to go forward victoriously and become a splendid, successful, vigorous, and benevolent people? Everything was settled that concerned the stability of our form of government. The future could surely contain nothing except joyous progress.

The Americans of 1820-30 expounded the glorious nature of their own destiny. They challenged the casual visitor to deny it; and became quite noted for their insistence upon this claim, and for their deter-

mination to secure the acknowledgment of it by all men.

At the bottom of this nervous concern there was not, as is generally supposed, merely the bumptious pride and ignorance of a new nation. There was something more complex and more honorable; there was an inner knowledge that none of these things were true. This knowledge was forced upon our fathers by their familiarity with their own political literature and with the Declaration of Independence in particular. There was a chasm between the agreeable statement that all men are created free and equal, and the horrible fact of human slavery. The thought of this incongruity troubled every American. No recondite or difficult reasoning was required to produce the mental anguish that now began to oppress America. The only thing necessary was leisure for anguish, and this leisure first became possible at the close of the second war with Great Britain. The operation of the thought was almost entirely unconscious, and its issue in pain almost entirely unexpressed.

The articulate classes had not talked much about slavery since the days of the constitutional compromises, and it is the aged Jef-

ferson who writes from Monticello apropos of the Missouri Compromise,—"This momentous question, like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once the knell of the Union."

Now there never was a moment in the history of the country when this fire-bell was quite silent. The educational policy of the articulate classes of society during the first fifty years of the Nation's life had been to hush the bell.

Ever since the Southern members in the Constitutional Convention had showed their teeth, and threatened to withdraw if slavery were disturbed, a policy of silence had been adopted. The questions covered by the Constitution were to be regarded as conclusively settled. The bandages must never be taken off them. Any person who reviews the history of the American Revolution can sympathize with this timidity; for it seems like a miracle that the Colonies should ever have come together,—so antagonistic were their interests, and their ideals. The Colonists feared some new breach, and there ensued a non-intellectual determination that certain questions should not be re-examined: this determination

gradually grew into our great stupefying dogma which says to the private citizen, "This is our way of doing things: you-be-damned: intellect has nothing to do with the matter: it is American." This dogma, which arose out of the needs of our early days, has become the most widespread form of metaphysical faith among us. No doubt all nations harbor similar prejudices as to their own institutions; but the nations of Europe have been jostled into liberalism by their contiguity one with another; and the jostling is now being extended to us. During our early history, however, we were isolated, and our intellectual classes took their American history a little too seriously. The state of mind of our statesmen and scholars in that epoch is well summed up in Webster's reply to Hayne. That speech closes an epoch. It is the great paving-stone of conclusive demonstration, placed upon the mouth of a natural spring.

All this while something had been left out in all the nation's political and social philosophy — something which policy forbade men to search for, and this something was beginning to move in the pit of the stomach of Americans, and to make them feel exceedingly and vaguely ill. In order to bind

the Colonies into a more lasting union, a certain suppression of truth, a certain trampling upon instinct had been resorted to in the Constitution. All the parties to that instrument thoroughly understood the iniquity of slavery and deplored it. All the parties were ashamed of slavery and yet felt obliged to perpetuate it. They wrapped up a twenty years' protection of the African slave trade in a colorless phrase.

"The migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importations, not exceeding ten dollars for each person."

Now the slave trade meant the purchase upon African coasts of negroes and negresses, their branding, herding, manacling, and transportation between decks across tropical seas. The African slave trade is probably the most brutal organized-crime in history. Our fathers did not dare to name it. So of the fugitive slave law; — the Constitution deals with it in the cruel, quiet way in which monstrous tyranny deals with the fictions of administrative law. "No

person held to service or labor in one state under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

In an age in which the Inquisition is absolutely dominant, its officials are almost kind. The leaden touch of hypocrisy was thus in the heart of our Constitution. Cold-heartedness radiated from the Ark of our Covenant. We condone this because we know that many of these fathers really did believe that slavery was probably going to diminish and die out in the country. Even while protecting it they hoped for the best, and knew not what they did. But as slavery became more important instead of less important, and as the cruelty of it became more visible, the bond of the document pressed upon the conscience of the people. We had undertaken more than we could perform. The suppression of truth, the trampling upon instinct, which we had accepted as a duty, was stifling us. For the first fifty years of our national life no reaction was visible. And then there ensued a fermentation, a tumult in the heart which noth-

ing could quell. This tumult began long before it showed itself. Its dialectic and logic were developed and ready for use, like the wings of the locust in the shell. The natures of men were beginning to heave and to swell — and at last, when Garrison speaks out, behold, he is in electrical communication with an age over-charged with passion. His thought is understood immediately. Every implication, every consequence, every remote contingency has been anticipated in the public consciousness, and there ensues explosion after explosion: crash generates crash: storm routes of continuous passion plow the heavens across the continent from sea to sea. In truth our whole civilization, our social life, our religious feelings, our political ideas, had all become accommodated to cruelty, representative of tyranny. The gigantic backbone of business-interest was a slavery backbone. We were a slave republic. For a generation, nay, for two hundred years, we had tolerated slavery; and for a generation it had been a sacred thing,— a man must suppress his feelings in speaking of it.

Now there is nothing more injurious to the character and to the intellect than the suppression of generous emotion. It means

death: — sickness to the individual, blight to the race. Compassion shining through the heart wears the very name and face of Divine Life. It makes the limbs strong and the mind capable; it strengthens the stomach and supports the intestines. Cramp this emotion, and you will have a half-dead man, whose children will be less well-nourished than himself.

It is hard to imagine the falsetto condition of life in the Northern States in 1829; — the lack of spontaneity and naturalness about everybody, so far as externals went, and the presence of extreme solicitude in the bottom of everybody's heart. Emerson speaks in his journal (1834) of the fine manners of the young Southerners, brought up amidst slavery, and of the deference which Northerners, both old and young, habitually paid to the people of the South. It seems to have been regarded as a social duty at the North to shield the feelings of Southerners, and, as it were, to apologize for not owning slaves. The feelings of the Northern philanthropist, however, were never regarded with delicacy. On the contrary it was thought to be his duty to suppress his feelings. Any exhibition of humane sentiment where slavery was concerned,— and it was

always concerned,— was punished immediately. The most natural impulses, the most simple acts of human piety could be indulged in only through an initiation of fierce pain, generally followed by social ostracism. The right to draw one's breath involved a struggle with Apollyon.

"Only a few days before one of our meetings," writes Henry I. Bowditch, one of Garrison's early recruits from the social world of Boston, "a young lady had hoped that I 'would never become an Abolitionist' and about the same time Frederick Douglass appeared as a runaway slave. He was at the meeting in Marlboro' Chapel. Of course I was introduced to him, and, as I would have invited a white friend, I asked him home to dine with me in my small abode in Bedford Street. It is useless to deny that I did not like the thought of walking with him in open midday up Washington Street. I *hoped* I would not meet any of my acquaintances. I had, however, hardly turned into the street before I met the young lady who had expressed her wish as above stated. I am glad now to say that I *did not skulk.* I looked at her straight and bowed in 'my most gracious manner' as if I were 'all right,' while I saw by her look of regret that

she thought me 'all wrong.' It was, however, something like a cold sponge-bath,— that Washington Street walk by the side of a black man,— rather terrible at the outset, but wonderfully warming and refreshing afterwards! I had literally jumped 'in medias res.' But I did not hear until years afterwards, and a long time after Douglass had held office in Washington under Federal Government, and the slavery of his own race had been washed out in blood, what I was doing for him at the moment that as a friend I asked him to walk home with me to dinner. How little do we appreciate acts that seem trivial or something worse to us, but which to others, affected by such acts, are of indispensable importance! Beautiful to me seems now the act, inasmuch as it helped to raise a poor, down-trodden soul into a proper self-appreciation. And how much I thank God that He led me by giving me a love of freedom, and something like a conscience to act as I did then." *

The strain of that walk upon Bowditch

*Many years afterwards, when an assemblage of anti-slavery veterans and hosts of young colored men were honoring Frederick Douglass in a public hall in Boston, he alluded to this incident with the remark, "Dr. Bowditch I greet joyfully here, for he first treated me *as if I were a man.*"

is felt forty years later in his account of it. The profound political instinct which led him to take the walk is as noticeable as the religious nature of his impulse. It is wonderful to reflect how little the significance of the act could have been understood by any casual observer of the scene. Here is a man who turns down one street rather than another, upon meeting an acquaintance. He looks like a gentleman doing an act of politeness; while he is, in fact, a saint going through the fire for his faith, and a hero saving the republic. So banal are externals, so deep is reality. But our present interest in the incident lies in this,— that it measures the separation of Massachusetts from the ordinary standards of Europe. Frederick Douglass was almost a man of genius and he *looked* like a man of genius. His photograph at the time of his escape from slavery might be the photograph of a musician or a painter. He was the kind of man who, in a Paris or London salon, would excite anyone's passing notice, as perhaps a South American diplomat or artist.

An intelligent foreign observer might have told Bowditch that the sufferings which both Bowditch and Douglass were enduring betrayed the fact that a social

revolution was under way. They were the sign of an approaching homogeneity. This universal disturbance, this universal throe is the first thing that all the people of the United States ever experienced together. Their former unions had been political and external: this was spiritual and internal.

We are familiar with the Northern form of the uneasiness, because the Northerner could speak. He cried out; and through his utterance came the cure. But of the pain of the Southerner, to whom all expression of feeling was denied, we know nothing. With the rise of Abolition, perished every vestige of free speech at the South. Events now converged to crush the manhood out of the slave-holding classes. A Southerner could not be gentle, unselfish, quick to speak his thought, or genuinely interested in anything. His opinions were prepared for him before he was born; and they were light-killing illusions,—the precursors of mania. The enactment of very stringent and inhuman slave codes, and the prohibition of all education to the slaves followed in the wake of the Abolition outbreaks. The maturing of a sort of philosophy of slavery, according to which slavery was seen as the cor-

nerstone of religion and progress, was the work of the following decade, and the task of Calhoun. The corollaries to this philosophy which involved an abandonment of popular education, and the cutting off of the South from every intellectual contact with the civilization of Europe, were duly worked out during the next thirty years. By the time the war came there existed a sort of Religion of Slavedom. The Pro-slavery Northern Democrats of Buchanan's time held opinions which would have shocked the most pronounced slaveholders of 1820.

During all this time Virginia and the Carolinas,— which constituted the Holyland of the Slave Dispensation,— endured a silent exodus and migration on the part of the more liberal spirits. Men even went to New Orleans to escape the tyranny of slave opinion at Charleston. Thus were the souls of Americans squeezed and their tempers made acid. A slightly *too ready responsiveness* to stimulus of any kind came to be the mark of the American, whether at the North or at the South; the difference being that the too ready response at the South was apt to be an insult, at the North an apology.

This hair trigger nervousness on the part of everybody was the result of poison in the

system. What could the manly Southern youth do? Leave all and follow Abolition? He knew of Abolition only that it was a villainous attack on his father's character and property. He was in the grip of a relentless, moving hurricane of distorted views, false feelings, erroneous philosophy; and he knew nothing clearly, understood nothing clearly, until he perished upon the battlefields of the Civil War, fighting like a hero.

It is impossible in describing the course of the Slave Power between 1832-65 to avoid harsh language. If ever wickedness came upward in the counsels of men, it did so here. Yet there are elements in all these matters which elude our analysis. The virtues glimmer and seem to go out; but they are never really extinguished. How much idealism, how much latent heroism must have existed in the South during all these years before the war, was seen when the war came. Villains do not choose for themselves Commanders like Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. It is lost, that old society, and it died almost speechless,— died justly and inevitably. Yet we do well to remember with what a flame of sacrifice it perished, to remember with what force, what devotion, what heroism, Humanity

showed herself to be still adorned in that hour of an all-devouring atonement.

The great fever came to an end with Appomattox. The delirium stopped: the plague had been expelled. The nation was not dead: the nation was at the beginning of a long convalescence. It is, however, about the earlier symptoms of the disorder that I would speak here, about the presentiments of headache and nausea, and about that dreadfullest moment in all sickness (as it seems to me), the moment when we admit that something serious is coming on.

The struggle between the North and the South began over free speech about the negro, and especially about the right of benevolent people at the North to extend their benevolence to the negro, as, for instance, in their schools, Sunday-schools, hospitals, etc. Now the South sincerely believed that the Missouri Compromise of 1820 had morally bound the North not to talk about slavery in private conversation, and not to treat the negro as a human being. The South had succeeded in imposing this conviction upon the whole North.

"The patriotism of all classes," wrote Edward Everett, Governor of Massachusetts, in a message to his Legislature, "the patri-

otism of all classes must be invoked to abstain from discussion, which by exasperating the master, can have no other effect than to render more oppressive the condition of the slave."

This paralysis of dumbness and of fear touched everyone. It was not exactly fear, either, but a sort of subtle freemasonry, a secret belief that nothing must be disturbed. The Southerners lived in sincere terror of slave uprisings — and they managed to convey a mysterious tremor to the North upon the subject.

Dr. Channing was that age's figure-head. He was the most eminent man in the country; the moral sciences were his province. He was, therefore, constantly appealed to by all persons and parties upon the slavery question. His responses and his conduct upon such occasions give the best key to that age which we have; and his character will be discussed as long as posterity takes an interest in the epoch. This must be my excuse for recurring to Dr. Channing from time to time and for using him, at this point, to illustrate the flatness and tameness of good men in that age; yes, to illustrate the spiritual domination of evil at the time when Garrison began his crusade. The drawing-

rooms of our grandfathers' times contained automata; ghosts clustered about the dinner tables. The people had forgotten what the sound of a man's voice was like. That is why they were so startled by Garrison.

Even Channing, who was a true saint, and when time was given him, a courageous man, is an injured being — like a beautiful plant which has grown to maturity in a dungeon. Under the pressure of his own conscience and of certain hammering Abolitionists who were his friends, he wrote an analysis of slavery, and stood shoulder to shoulder with the Abolitionists on the question of free speech. It is to his everlasting honor that he did this: for he sincerely deplored the methods of the Abolitionists and was incapable of understanding their mission. By his writings on slavery and by his act in standing by the Abolitionists on the question of free speech, Channing became a broken idol to all of the South and to half of his Boston admirers. We must never confound him, as the Abolitionists were prone to do, with the contemporary flock of time-serving parsons. Channing was a man who could, and did, go through the fire for principle. But he was a man lacking in instinct, a sad man, too

reasonable to understand this crisis or know how to meet it. He was trampled upon by his congregation, and knew not how to save himself.

Dr. Channing's coldness toward Abolition might be shown by his words to Daniel Webster in 1828, deprecating any agitation of the slavery question; by his studied avoidance of Garrison in social life; by his inability, even in the Essay on Slavery, to see the importance of the Abolition movement;— or in a hundred other ways. On the other hand, Dr. Channing's services to the Anti-slavery cause could be illustrated by this same essay, and by the esteem and love which many leading Anti-slavery people always bore him. Let us, however, go to the bottom of the whole matter.

On January 13th, 1840, Dr. Charles Follen, a German enthusiast and one of the few highly educated men among the Abolitionists, was burned alive in the ill-fated steamer *Lexington,* while on a journey from New York to Boston. Follen was a young doctor of laws and a teacher at the University of Jena, who had been prosecuted for his liberal opinions by the reactionary governments of Prussia and Austria in 1824. He had fled to Switzerland and thence to the

United States. His friends in this country secured him a post as lecturer, and afterwards as professor, at Harvard College; which post he lost through expressing his opinions on slavery. He afterwards took a pastorate in the Unitarian Church and lost it through the same cause.

Follen was what Goethe used to call a "Schoene Seele," — beloved of all. He was an especial friend of Channing's. His tragic death was at the time considered by the Abolitionists as the severest blow which they had yet received. They sought a place to hold a commemorative meeting in his honor, and they applied to Channing for permission to use his church; which Channing accorded. The standing committee of the church, however, cancelled this permission. Channing's biographer speaks as follows:

"Nothing in all his (Channing's) intercourse with his people, nothing in his whole Anti-slavery experience, caused him so much pain as a refusal of the use of the church to the Massachusetts Anti-slavery Society, on the sad occasion when all true-hearted persons were called to mourn the awful death of Charles Follen, and when the Rev. S. J. May had prepared a discourse

in commemoration of the rare virtues of that heroic and honored man. It was not only the insult to the memory of a beloved friend that grieved him,— though this could not but shock his quick and delicate feelings; still less was it the disregard, under such touching circumstances, of his well-known wishes, that wounded him most deeply; but this manifestation of a want of high sentiment in the congregation to which, for so many years, he had officiated as pastor, made him question the usefulness of his whole ministry. To what end had he poured out his soul, if such conduct was a practical embodiment of the principles and precepts which he had so earnestly inculcated? This event brought home to his heart the conviction that the need was very urgent of a thorough application of the Christian law of love to all existing social relations."

It is evident to the common mind that Channing should have resigned his post rather than accept this affront from his flock. Nay, Channing should have resigned twenty years earlier, and upon the first occasion when any such subjection of his own impulses was required of him. The anecdote shows the skeleton that lurked in all the

vestry rooms of that period. It shows also how partial are the *philosophic* illuminations of men. Dr. Channing disbelieved in the principle of association. It was one of the points in his disapproval of the Anti-slavery people that they worked through associations; for he had a philosophic disbelief in the theory of association. I share this disbelief with Dr. Channing; the miserable squabbles between Anti-slavery associations in which the reformers wasted their force and impaired their tempers, show very clearly the dangers inherent in association, which dangers Channing very clearly saw. Yet Channing was himself the servant of an association; and every fault in his relation to the great moral question of his time may be traced to that fact.

Association,— business or social, literary or artistic, religious or scientific,— all association is opposed to any disrupting idea. The merchants and lawyers of Boston fled Abolition as a plague; they regarded Abolition as an enemy to be fought with all weapons. Garrison was once taken to hear Dr. Channing by an acquaintance of both parties, and he sat in a pew which belonged to a conservative family, but which that family had been in the habit of throwing open to others.

On the Tuesday following this apparition of Garrison in the sacred pew, the future use of it was withdrawn by a stiff note from the conservative family. The reason for this excess of caution was that the South disciplined Northern merchants by a withdrawal of business; and the South kept its eyes open. A rumor that Garrison had been seen in a particular pew might make the pew-owner a marked man for commercial punishment. "Mr. May," said a New York merchant of the first rank to the reformer, whom he summoned to an interview during the progress of an Anti-slavery meeting, "Mr. May, we are not such fools as not to know that slavery is a great evil; a great wrong. But it was consented to by the founders of our Republic. It was provided for in the Constitution of our Union. A great portion of the property of the Southerners is invested under its sanction; and the business of the North, as well as the South, has become adjusted to it. There are millions upon millions of dollars due from Southerners to the merchants and mechanics of this city alone, the payment of which would be jeopardized by any rupture between the North and the South. We cannot afford, sir, to let you and your associates succeed

in your endeavor to overthrow slavery. It is not a matter of principle with us. It is a matter of business necessity. We cannot afford to let you succeed. And I have called you out to let you know, and to let your fellow-laborers know, that we do not mean to allow you to succeed. We mean, sir," said he, with increased emphasis,— "we mean, sir, to put you Abolitionists down,— by fair means if we can, by foul means if we must."

Truly the world was not very different then from what it is to-day. If a man takes a stand against any business interest, however iniquitous, that interest will strike at him on the following day.

III

THE FIGURE

THE essential quality of all this old society was that it was *cold*. In the last analysis,— after the historical and constitutional questions have been patiently analyzed, after economics and sociology have had their say,— the trouble with the American of 1830 was that he had a cold heart. Cruelty, lust, business interest, remoteness from European influence had led to the establishment of an unfeeling civilization. The essential quality of Garrison is that he is hot. This must be borne in mind at every moment as the chief and real quality of Garrison. Disregard the arguments; sink every intellectual conception, every bit of logic and of analysis, and look upon the age; — you see a cold age. Look upon Garrison:— you see a hot coal of fire. He plunges through the icy atmosphere like a burning meteorite from another planet.

There is a second contrast. The age was conciliatory; Garrison is aggressive. These

two forms of the contrast between Garrison and his age lie close together and merge into each other: yet they are not entirely identical: the first concerns the emotions, the second, the intellect. Conciliation was the sin of that age. Now this anti-type, this personified enemy of his age,— Garrison,— must in his nature be self-reliant, self-assertive, self-sufficient. He relates himself to no precedent. He strikes out from his inner thought. He is even swords-drawn with his own thought of yesterday. When he changes his mind he asks God to forgive him for ever having thought otherwise. His instinct is so thoroughly opposed to any authority except the inner light of conscience, that he makes that conscience,— his local, momentary conscience,— into a column of smoke sent by the Lord. Not Bunyan, not Luther is greater than Garrison on this side of his nature. He is not an intellectual person. He is not a highly educated man. But he is a Will of the first magnitude, a will made perfect, because almost entirely unconscious, almost entirely dedicated and subdued to its mission.

I quote here the whole of the first editorial of The *Liberator* (January 1st, 1831), because the whole of Garrison is in it. In

reading it let us remember the shattering, repulsive power which self-assertion exercises over smooth, cold people of good taste, whose worldly fortunes and sincere spiritual beliefs are bound up for all eternity with smoothness, coldness, and good taste. The punctuation and typesetting of the article, and the verses (not his own) at the end of it, may also be noted as indicating Garrison's taste and education:

"In the month of August, I issued proposals for publishing The *Liberator* in Washington City; but the enterprise, though hailed in different sections of the country, was palsied by public indifference. Since that time, the removal of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* to the Seat of Government has rendered less imperious the establishment of a similar periodical in that quarter.

"During my recent tour for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact that a greater revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free States — *and particularly in New England* — than at the South. I found contempt more bitter, opposition more active,

detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slave-owners themselves. Of course, there were individual exceptions to the contrary. This state of things afflicted, but did not dishearten me. I determined at every hazard to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, *within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birthplace of liberty*. That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float, unhurt by the spoliations of time or the missiles of a desperate foe — yea, till every chain be broken, and every bondman set free! Let Southern oppressors tremble — let their secret abettors tremble — let their Northern apologists tremble — let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble.

"I deem the publication of my original Prospectus unnecessary, as it has obtained a wide circulation. The principles therein inculcated will be steadily pursued in this paper, excepting that I shall not array myself as the political partisan of any man. In defending the great cause of human rights, I wish to derive the assistance of all religions and of all parties."

Thus began Garrison in his first editorial in the *Liberator*. Does this seem egotism,

this almost pompous deliberation, this taking off his coat and laying it across a chair as he makes his bow to the public? Yes, it is egotism. It is gigantic egotism,— but not the egotism of vanity or self-seeking. It is the selfless egotism of a supreme self-assertion, put forth unconsciously by human nature; and as such it is in itself a sample of what that age needed, the sample of a spirit of independence without which slavery never could and never would have been abolished. Let us proceed with the editorial. . . . "Assenting to the 'self-evident truth' maintained in the American Declaration of Independence, 'that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights — among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,' I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population. In Park Street Church, on the Fourth of July, 1829, in an address on slavery, I unreflectingly assented to the popular but pernicious doctrine of *gradual* abolition. I seize this opportunity to make a full and unequivocal recantation, and thus publicly to ask pardon of my God, of my country, and of my brethren, the poor slaves, for having uttered a sentiment so full

of timidity, injustice, and absurdity. A similar recantation, from my pen, was published in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* at Baltimore, in September, 1829. My conscience is now satisfied.

"I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I *will be* as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; — but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest — I will not equivocate — I will not excuse — I will not retreat a single inch — AND I WILL BE HEARD. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

"It is pretended that I am retarding the cause of emancipation by the coarseness of my invective and the precipitancy of my measures. *The charge is not true.* On this question my influence,— humble as it is,—

is felt at this moment to a considerable extent, and shall be felt in coming years — not perniciously, but beneficially — not as a curse, but as a blessing; and posterity will bear testimony that I was right. I desire to thank God that He enables me to disregard 'the fear of man which bringeth a snare,' and to speak his truth in its simplicity and power. . . .

. . . "And here I close with this fresh dedication:

"Oppression! I have seen thee, face to face,
And met thy cruel eye and cloudy brow;
But thy soul-withering glance I fear not now —
For dread to prouder feelings doth give place
Of deep abhorrence! Scouring the disgrace
Of slavish knees that at thy footstool bow,
I also kneel — but with far other vow
Do hail thee and thy herd of hirelings base: —
I swear, while life-blood warms my throbbing veins,
Still to oppose and thwart, with heart and hand,
Thy brutalizing sway — till Afric's chains
Are burst, and Freedom rules the rescued land,—

Trampling Oppression and his iron rod:
Such is the vow I take — SO HELP ME GOD!"

Garrison's early history is the familiar tale of poverty, and reminds one of Benjamin Franklin's boyhood. His mother, a person of education and refinement, was, during Garrison's babyhood, plunged into bitter destitution. He was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1805. At the age of nine, in order to help pay for his board, he was working for Deacon Bartlett in Newburyport. Later, he learned shoemaking at Lynn, cabinet-making at Haverhill, and in 1818, at the age of thirteen, was apprenticed to a printer and newspaper publisher. Now began his true education. He read Scott, Byron, Moore, Pope, and Campbell; and at the age of seventeen, was writing newspaper articles in the style of the day. By the time he was twenty, Garrison was a thoroughgoing printer and journalist; and during the last three years of his apprenticeship he had entire charge of his master's paper. During the next four years, he edited four newspapers, and embraced various reforms besides Anti-slavery, e. g., Temperance, Education, Peace, Sabbatarianism, etc. He seems at this period to be

like a hound on a scent, as he takes up and abandons one newspaper after another. He is already a reformer, already a boiling enthusiast, already an insuppressible Volubility, already one-ideaed upon any subject that he treats. If his theme be Temperance, then moderate drinking is the worst enemy of man. He joins most heartily in the anathema against tobacco either in chewing, smoking, or snuffing. He is against capital punishment and imprisonment for debt, and it is safe to say that he would, at a moment's notice, have delivered a violent judgment upon any subject that aroused his compassion.

Whatever else he was, he was a full grown being at the age of twenty-four, when Benjamin Lundy persuaded him to devote his life to the cause of the slave. Benjamin Lundy, the quiet Quaker, had been editing the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* since 1821, and was at this time (1828) established in Baltimore, where he had recently been assaulted and almost killed in the streets by Austin Woolfolk, a slave trader. Lundy's practice was to walk from town to town throughout the country, founding Anti-slavery societies, and introducing his newspaper. He first met Garrison while he was

on a visit to Boston, and at a later date he walked from Baltimore to Bennington, Vermont, where Garrison was editing a journal, in order to convert Garrison. He succeeded. Garrison left Vermont and became co-editor of the *Genius* in Baltimore. Before he migrated to Baltimore, however, he visited Boston and there on July 4th, 1829, he delivered an address in the Park Street Church which is really the beginning of his mission. The Reverend John Pierpont (the grandfather of Pierpont Morgan) was present and wrote a hymn for the occasion. Whittier, a stripling, was also present. The tone and substance of this address are strikingly like those of Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa address (delivered six years later), in which Emerson made his manly salutatory to his age. Garrison's words are as follows:—

"I speak not as a partisan or an opponent of any man or measures, when I say that our politics are rotten to the core. We boast of our freedom, who go shackled to the polls, year after year, by tens, and hundreds, and thousands! We talk of free agency, who are the veriest machines — the merest automata — in the hands of unprincipled jugglers! We prate of integrity, and

virtue, and independence, who sell our birthright for office, and who, nine times in ten, do not get Esau's bargain — no, not even a mess of pottage! Is it republicanism to say that the majority can do no wrong? Then I am not a republican. Is it aristocracy to say that the people sometimes shamefully abuse their high trust? Then I am an aristocrat. . . .

"Before God, I must say, that such a glaring contradiction as exists between our creed and practice, the annals of six thousand years cannot parallel. In view of it, I am ashamed of my country. I am sick of our unmeaning declamation in praise of liberty and equality; of our hypocritical cant about the unalienable rights of man. I could not, for my right hand, stand up before a European assembly, and exult that I am an American citizen, and denounce the usurpations of a kingly government as wicked and unjust; or, should I make the attempt, the recollection of my country's barbarity and despotism would blister my lips, and cover my cheeks with burning blushes of shame."

Let us now take a few sentences from Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa address:

"The spirit of the American freeman is

already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. Public and private avarice make the air we breathe thick and fat. The scholar is decent, indolent, complaisant. See already the tragic consequence. The mind of this country, taught to aim at low objects, eats upon itself. . . . Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust, some of them suicides. What is the remedy? They did not yet see, and thousands of young men as hopeful now crowding to the barriers for the career do not yet see, that if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him."

The difference between Emerson and Garrison is that Emerson is interested in æsthetic, Garrison in social matters. The one represents the world of intellect, the other, the world of feeling. Both speak the same idea, each according to his own idiom. Both are, in essence, affronting the same

evil,— the Dominion of Slavery. The difference is that Garrison has seen the evil plainly, and has laid his hand upon it; Emerson was to live in ignorance of its specific nature for many years to come. I shall revert again to the relation between these two young men, both so noble, both of such immense consequence to the country, each of them, in a sense, the father of all of us,— whose spirits were raised up by God to shed new life upon America.

We must return to Garrison as the co-editor with Lundy of the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* in Baltimore. Inasmuch as Garrison had already received his revelation as to *immediate* emancipation, and Lundy favored slower methods, the two partners agreed to sign their articles separately. Baltimore was, at that time, the most northern port in the coastwise slave trade: and Garrison constantly saw the slaves being shipped south in New England bottoms. It was not long before Garrison was thrown into jail in Baltimore as the result of a suit for criminal libel, brought by a New England slave trader whom he had denounced. The Mr. Todd whom he "libeled," and about whom he spoke only the truth, was a fellow-townsman of Garrison's,

being a native of Newburyport, Mass., and was thus a natural target for Garrison's invective. Garrison remained in jail seven weeks, during which time he conducted a most telling campaign of pamphlets, private letters and public cards, sonnets, letters to editors, etc., with the result that the whole of America heard of the incident. Mr. Arthur Tappan of New York became interested in the case, and secured Garrison's release by paying the fine of one hundred dollars. This was in the spring of 1830.

Thus it may be seen that at the time that Garrison returned to Boston and established his *Liberator* (1830-31) he was twenty-five years old, a consummate controversialist, and the apostle of a new theory,—Immediate Emancipation, for which he had already suffered imprisonment. The world has no terrors for a man like this.

Anti-slavery action did not begin with Garrison. There had been Anti-slavery Societies for fifty years before him; there existed in 1830 perhaps a hundred and fifty of them, many of them being in the slave states. But the new movement did not spring from these old societies. It was militant as they were not: it was dissatisfied with their mild methods and inactivity: in

fact, it denounced them. The new movement came bursting up like a subterranean torrent.

I have no doubt that Garrison and his mission were somehow fundamentally connected with the labors of the Anti-slavery men who kept the name of mercy alive between 1776 and 1820. Yet these old agencies were upheaved from beneath. Abolition appeared at the North and overslaughed them; the Slave Power developed new heat at the South and burned out the roots of them. Any single anecdote of those times will be apt to illustrate both sides of the question, i. e., the new vulture quality of slavery at the South, and the new bulldog quality of Abolition at the North. For instance, when the Southern statesmen recognized the existence of Abolition, they began passing laws against the introduction of Abolition literature into the South, and they began to correspond with Northern statesmen and officials with the aim of suppressing Garrison. The Legislature of Georgia, in 1831, offered a reward of $5000 for the arrest and conviction of Garrison under the laws of Georgia. The Southern press went into paroxysms of clamorous rage. On the other hand, Gar-

rison is by no means deficient in vigor of feeling. The following is his comment on the reward:

"A price set upon the head of a citizen of Massachusetts — for what? For daring to give his opinions of the moral aspect of slavery! Where is the liberty of the press and of speech? Where the spirit of our fathers? Where the immunities secured to us by our Bill of Rights? Are we the slaves of Southern taskmasters? Is it treason to maintain the principles of the Declaration of Independence? Must we say that slavery is a sacred and benevolent institution, or be silent? Know this, ye senatorial patrons of kidnappers! that we despise your threats as much as we deplore your infatuation: nay, more — know that a hundred men stand ready to fill our place as soon as it is made vacant by violence. The *Liberator* shall yet live — live to warn you of your danger and guilt — live to plead for the perishing slaves — live to hail the day of universal emancipation!"

Now we can see at a glance that this new Abolition is much more than Abolition: it is Courage. Garrison's tone here takes us back a generation to James Otis, to John Adams, and to the other Revolutionary he-

roes; and he is really standing for constitutional liberty quite as distinctly, and at as crucial a moment, as those gentlemen had done. Garrison's language is harsh; but he is almost the only out-and-out masculine person in the North. No: there was one other,— the aged John Quincy Adams; and Adams was as harsh, and as unmeasured, as Garrison. Nay, Adams was personally bitter, which Garrison never was. Adams was, in reality, a survivor of 1776, an untamed aristocrat — and he bore a vase of the old fire in his bosom. This was permitted to Adams,— because no one could stop him; but men vaguely imagined that Garrison's fire could be put out.

In 1831, Garrison was indicted in North Carolina. The South was not wrong in thinking that the official classes at the North would lend aid in suppressing the new movement. Judge Thatcher of the Municipal Court in Boston made a charge to the Grand Jury (1832) in which he laid the foundation for the criminal prosecution of Abolitionists. No one could tell just how far subserviency might go. The Mayor of Boston, Harrison Gray Otis, was naturally appealed to by the Southern statesmen to protect them against the circulation

of Abolition literature. It was in 1829 that Otis was first called on to do something about "Walker's appeal," a fierce, biblical pamphlet, full of power, written by a colored man in Boston and urging the slaves to rise. Otis replied that the author had not made himself amenable to the laws of Massachusetts, and that the book had caused no excitement in Boston. Garrison had had nothing to do with Walker's pamphlet, and had publicly condemned its doctrines. None the less, Walker's appeal was an outcrop of the same subterranean fire that coursed through Garrison,— and when Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion broke out (1831) and a dozen white families were murdered in Virginia, the whole South was thrown into a panic, and attributed the insurrection to the teachings of the Abolitionists.

This puny rebellion was easily put down. Turner was hanged, his followers were burnt with hot irons, their faces were mutilated, their jaws broken asunder, their hamstrings cut, their bodies stuck like hogs, their heads spiked to the whipping-post. No connection was ever discovered between Nat Turner's Rebellion and the Abolitionists, who never at any time sent their papers to slaves. The illiteracy of the blacks made it

improbable that they had been influenced by any sort of writings. And yet one cannot help feeling that the existence of a militant propaganda in their behalf had reached the consciousness of the slaves, and that this rising was the outcome of the new age. Angels' wings were beating upon the air, and charging it with both life and death, till even dumb slaves felt the impulsion. Various Southern governors, statesmen, and newspapers renewed the campaign against the *Liberator,* and Otis was again appealed to.

"To be more specific in our object," says the *National Intelligencer* which was published in Washington, and was one of the most influential journals of the epoch, "we now appeal to the worthy Mayor of the City of Boston, whether no law can be found to prevent the publication, in the city over which he presides, of such diabolical papers (copies of the *Liberator*) as we have seen a sample of here in the hands of slaves, and of which there are many in circulation to the south of us. We have no doubt whatever of the feelings of Mr. Otis on this subject, or those of his respectable constituents. We know they would prompt him and them to arrest the instigator of

human butchery in his mad career. We know the difficulty which surrounds the subject, because the nuisance is not a nuisance, technically speaking, within the limits of Massachusetts. But, surely, if the courts of law have no power, public opinion has to interfere, until the intelligent Legislature of Massachusetts can provide a durable remedy for this most appalling grievance. . . ."

Robert Y. Hayne of Columbia, S. C., begged Otis to find out whether Garrison had mailed him (Hayne) a copy of the *Liberator*. Otis obsequiously sent a deputy to question Garrison. This was something very like a prostitution of his office on the part of Mayor Otis; because what Hayne wanted was to obtain *evidence* to be used in a criminal prosecution of Garrison. Garrison at once becomes the able constitutional lawyer.

"The Hon. Robert Y. Hayne of Columbia, S. C.," says the *Liberator* of October 29th, 1831, "(through the medium of a letter), wishes to know of the Mayor of Boston, who sent a number of the *Liberator* to him, a few weeks ago. The Mayor of Boston (through the medium of a deputy) wishes to know of Mr. Garrison whether he

sent the aforesaid number to the aforesaid individual. Mr. Garrison (through the medium of his paper) wishes to know of the Hon. Robert Y. Hayne of Columbia, S. C., and the Mayor of Boston, what authority they have to put such questions?"

We can see in this, as in all the rest of Garrison's activity, the tactician of genius. We can see also the inner relation between morality and constitutional law, which exists in all ages. The Reformer is always struggling against arbitrary power. He invokes the protection of some law or custom which exists, or ought to exist. In cases where this law or custom has a historic basis, the struggle goes on in the form of constitutional law. The picture of the Reformer is always the picture of Courage and of Mercy: the courageous man who is, by his conduct, protecting the weak. It is this vision of courage and mercy in operation, that melts the heart and inspires new courage and mercy in the beholder. Here is the great question which stands behind all the details; for courage and mercy are of eternal importance. That is why we hear so much of Pym, Hampden, etc. Their conduct has a direct relation to present conditions. No day passes in which every man is not put

to the test many times over, as to his personal relation towards the cowardices and cruelties of his own age.

Major Otis saw nothing important in the episode which has given him a Dantesque immortality. He had never heard of the *Liberator*. He therefore, procured a copy of it.

"I am told," he said, "that it is supported chiefly by the free colored people; that the number of subscribers in Baltimore and Washington exceeds that of *those in this city*, and that it is gratuitously left at one or two of the reading rooms in this place. It is edited by an individual who formerly lived at Baltimore, where his feelings have been exasperated by some occurrences consequent to his publications there, on topics connected with the condition of slaves in this country. . . ."

At a later period Otis wrote:

"Some time afterward, it was reported to me by the city officers that they had ferreted out the paper and its editor; that his office was an obscure hole, his only visible auxiliary a negro boy, and his supporters a very few insignificant persons of all colors. This information, with the consent of the aldermen, I communicated to the above-

named governors, with an assurance of my belief that the new fanaticism had not made, nor was likely to make, proselytes among the respectable classes of our people. In this, however, I was mistaken."

History has left us, in this anecdote, a silhouette of Harrison Gray Otis, one of Boston's most eminent personages at that time, — the representative of the old Puritan blood, of the education, wealth, good looks, social prominence, and political power of Boston's leaders. In how short a time, and with how easy a transformation does patriot turn tyrant. Here is the nephew of James Otis, hand in glove with the iniquity of his age. He who was rocked in the cradle of liberty, is now the agent of the Inquisition. And he is perfectly innocent. He is a mere toy and creature of his time. A new issue has arisen that neither he nor his generation understand, and behold, they have become oppressors.

The Hercules that is to save mankind from these monsters is in the meanwhile working fourteen hours a day, setting type. The *Liberator* was begun without a dollar of capital and without a single subscriber. Garrison and his partner, Isaac Knapp, a young white man equally poor and equally

able to bear privation, composed, set, and printed the paper themselves. They lived chiefly upon bread and milk, a few cakes and a little fruit, obtained from the baker's shop opposite and from a petty cake and fruit shop in the basement. "I was often at the office of the *Liberator*," wrote the Rev. James C. White. "I knew of his (Garrison's) self-denials. I knew he slept in the office with a table for a bed, a book for a pillow, and a self-prepared scanty meal for his rations in the office, while he set up his articles in the *Liberator* with his own hand, and without previous committal to paper."

"It was a pretty large room," says Josiah Copley, who visited it in the winter of 1832-33, "but there was nothing in it to relieve its dreariness but two or three very common chairs and a pine desk in the corner, at which a pale, delicate, and apparently over-tasked gentleman was sitting. . . . I never was more astonished. All my preconceptions were at fault. My ideal of the man was that of a stout, rugged, dark-visaged desperado — something like we picture a pirate. He was a quiet, gentle, and I might say handsome man — a gentleman indeed, in every sense of the word."

"The dingy walls; the small windows, bespattered with printer's ink; the press standing in one corner; the composing-stands opposite; the long editorial and mailing table, covered with newspapers; the bed of the editor and publisher on the floor — all these," says Oliver Johnson, "make a picture never to be forgotten."

IV

PICTURES OF THE STRUGGLE

THERE are pages in the memoirs of Anti-slavery that shine with a light which sanctifies this continent, and which will be undiminished a thousand years hence. Nay, it will shine more clearly then than now; for we are still living in the valley of the shadow of death.

The war followed so quickly upon the true awakening of the nation as to the nature of slavery that those early watchers, whose cries had aroused us, were still in coventry; they were still held to be odious, although their piercing appeal had put life and religion into all. The North died for the slave, with condemnation of the Abolitionist upon its lips. This paradoxical outcome was due to the rapidity with which events moved during the final crisis. A revolution may be studied in its origins, and may be comprehended through its results; but during the actual cascade that leads from the one epoch to the other, scene succeeds

scene with such fury that history becomes unintelligible. In the years that intervened between the Kansas troubles and the outbreak of the war, so many things happened at once that all issues and all feelings were telescoped together. There followed the picturesque horrors and scenes of war-time; there followed the new patriotism, the new heroes, the New Legend,—all of it so vivid, so drenched in grief, so glorified by honor, so informed with the meaning of a new heaven and a new earth, that the immediate past was belittled. The Abolitionists thus passed straight from the odium of people preaching unpleasant truth to the odium of people proclaiming what everybody knows. They have never had a heyday. Their cause triumphed but not they themselves. They still remain under a cloud in America, and are regarded with some distrust by the historian and by the common man. I can scarcely find a man who sees in these early Abolitionists, as I do, the lamp and light of the whole after-coming epoch. Perhaps our age is still too near to theirs to do it justice; and the mere flight of time may bring men to a truer perspective of the whole matter.

Religious animosities do not die out in a moment. Many of us still feel a lambent and rising heat course through our veins in reading the history of the religious wars of three centuries ago. This is because those wars have come down in family life, and are thus a part of the intimate personal history of men. So of this just-buried cause, Abolition. Consider how the American of to-day reads the Constitutional History of the years before the war. Nullification, the Texas scheme, the Mexican War, the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the Kansas troubles,— all these things and every subsidiary foreign or domestic issue in our annals, are interesting to us because we feel so intimately the hot place in each one of them. Part of this heat comes from prejudice and accident, part of it from the central focus of truth; and we cannot always be sure which kind it is that burns in us. But there is a species of glow that can be trusted. It comes to us when we read accounts of heroism. Tales of noble self-sacrifice never remain mere adjuncts to a creed, or portions of a partisan tradition. They contain in themselves the whole of salvation. Posterity will recur to the age of the Anti-slavery

movement in order to find there those little digests of human nature which are true to all time. Here are the gems in the treasury of a nation's life; and it matters not to later ages whether the geological strata in which they lie embedded be Catholic or Protestant, Christian or pagan, political or religious.

Whenever a reform movement is started in this world and is making headway, the evils which it threatens instinctively strive to gain control over it. We see this every day in our local citizens' movements, which always begin by sincere activity, and almost always grow effete through capture by the politicians. Our civil service associations tend to become absorbed by the political parties, who man them with paid officials, and run up the expenses till the cure has become a part of the disease. This oscillation between reform and absorption goes on ceaselessly; and the young prophet always finds himself obliged to attack and destroy some sham reform association, bearing a fine name, before he can get at the real evil. Let us note this also; that a somnolent and inactive reform association, with a fine name, and an aroma of original benevolence about it, and perhaps even a

superficially good record, is the very sort of association to attract respectable, rich, lazy, and conservative people.

The Colonization Society in 1830 presented an extreme case of sham reform. It had been started in 1816 in Virginia, with the avowed object of transporting free negroes to Africa. It had been pushed with diligence and paraded as the cure for the evils of slavery, and its benevolence was assumed on all hands. Everybody of consequence belonged to it. Garrison, himself, joined it in good faith. This Colonization Society had, by an invisible process, half conscious, half unconscious, been transformed into a serviceable organ and member of the Slave Power. In order to investigate the real functions of this society, Garrison, in 1831, obtained from its headquarters at Washington, the files of its documents and of its newspaper, the *African Repository.*

"The result of his labors," says Oliver Johnson, "was seen in a bulky pamphlet, that came from the press in the spring, entitled 'Thoughts on African Colonization; or, an Impartial Exhibition of the Doctrines, Principles and Purposes of the American Colonization Society; together

with the Resolutions, 'Addresses and Remonstrances of the Free People of Color.' As a compilation of facts and authorities it was unanswerable and overwhelming. It condemned the Colonization Society out of its own mouth, and by a weight of evidence that was irresistible. There was just enough of comment to elucidate the testimony from official sources and bring it within the comprehension of the simplest reader. His indictment contained ten averments, viz.: 1, The American Colonization Society is pledged not to oppose the system of slavery; 2, It apologizes for slavery and slave-holders; 3, It recognizes slaves as property; 4, It increases the value of slaves; 5, It is the enemy of immediate abolition; 6, It is nourished by fear and selfishness; 7, It aims at the utter expulsion of the blacks; 8, It is the disparager of the free blacks; 9, It denies the possibility of elevating the blacks in this country; 10, It deceives and misleads the Nation. Each of these averments was supported by pages of citations from the annual reports of the society, from the pages of its official organ, the *African Repository,* and from the speeches of its leading champions in all parts of the country. It was impossible to

set this evidence aside, and equally so to resist the conclusions drawn therefrom. The work could not be, and therefore was not answered."

The book made a tremendous sensation and became the arsenal of the Abolitionists in this country and of their exponents abroad. "It was early in 1852, I think," says Elizur Wright, "that Mr. Garrison struck the greatest blow of his life — or any man's life — by publishing in a thick pamphlet, with all the emphasis that a printer knows how to give to types, his *Thoughts on Colonization.*" The Colonization Society was an embodiment of the public consciousness. It was prevalent, it was a part of the people's daily life. All the great divines belonged to it, all the academic bigwigs, social figure-heads and moneyed men. And yet, in fact, Colonization was a sort of obscene dragon that lay before the Palace of Slavery to devour or corrupt all assailants. Garrison attacked it like Perseus, with a ferocity which to this day is thrilling. His eyes, his words, and his sword flash and glitter. And he slew it. He cut off its supplies, he destroyed its reputation in Europe; and he thereby opened the path between the Abolition movement and the con-

science of America. Nothing he ever did was more able. Nothing that Frederick the Great, Washington or Napoleon ever did in the field of war was more brilliant than this political foray of Garrison, then at the age of twenty-seven, upon the key-position and jugular vein of slavery.

Among the immediate consequences of Garrison's pamphlet on colonization was the contest over Lane Seminary at Cincinnati, a contest which became the storm center of Abolition influence for a year, and qualified public opinion ever after. I quote part of the account given by Oliver Johnson from his well-known volume on Garrison and his time,— from which many of these illustrations are taken. Johnson was a right-hand man of Garrison's and at times was editor and co-editor of the *Liberator*. He gave up his life to Anti-slavery, and is a fair example of the sort of man who came into existence, as if by miracle, when Garrison stamped his foot in 1830.

"The founding of Lane Seminary, at the gateway of the great West, was a part of this plan, to extend the influence of Orthodoxy, and Dr. Beecher,* being generally

* Rev. Lyman Beecher, father of Henry Ward Beecher and of Harriet Beecher Stowe.

recognized as the leader of New England Revivalism, and the strongest representative of the advanced school of Orthodoxy at that day, Mr. Tappan thought that he of all others was the man best fitted to train a body of ministers for the new field. The Doctor, after considerable delay, and to the great grief of his Boston church, accepted the appointment. Such was his fame that a large class of students, of unusual maturity of judgment and ripeness of Christian experience, was at once attracted to the Seminary. In the literary and theological departments together, they numbered about one hundred and ten. Eleven of these were from different slave States; seven were sons of slaveholders; one was himself a slaveholder, and one had purchased his freedom from cruel bondage by the payment of a large sum of money, which he had earned by extra labor. Besides these there were ten others who had resided for longer or shorter periods in the slave States, and made careful observation of the character and workings of slavery. The youngest of these students was nineteen years of age; most of those in the theological department were more than twenty-six, and several were over thirty. Most if not all of them

had been converted in the revivals of that period, and were filled with the revival spirit in which Dr. Beecher so much delighted. A more earnest and devoted band of students was probably never gathered in any theological seminary. The Doctor had great pride as well as confidence in them."

The students in this Seminary at Cincinnati were planning to form a Colonization Society, and Garrison's pamphlet being in the air, its arguments were being used to oppose the plan. The students therefore organized a nine days' solemn debate upon the whole matter, with the result that Garrison and Immediate Emancipation carried the day. In the meantime the country at large took an interest in the affair, and the press assailed the Seminary as a hotbed of Abolition. Dr. Lyman Beecher and the trustees were harried and threatened. The hearts of the Abolitionists were stirred to the depths.

"In every part of the free States," says Oliver Johnson, "there were Christian men and godly women not a few, who prayed to God night and day that Lyman Beecher might be imbued with strength and courage to stand up nobly in the face of the storm that raged around him, and maintain the

right of his pupils, as candidates for the Christian ministry, to investigate and discuss the subject of slavery, and to bear their testimony against it as a sin, and a mighty hindrance to the spread of the Gospel."

At last, the trustees of the Seminary, thinking to avoid the danger, forbade the students to discuss slavery at all,— even in private. The outcome was that seventy or eighty students resigned in a body. The institution was disgraced and wrecked; it never recovered from the experience. The greatest result of the episode, however, was this, that the young men who resigned became, by force of circumstances, something like public characters. Their first step was a public one,— into the arena. They issued an appeal to the Christian public, and many of them went out into the world as protagonists of Abolition.

Here was a miraculous draught indeed; for, of course, among them were men of mark; and Theodore D. Weld, the ringleader, was, as Johnson says, the peer of Beecher himself in native ability. Thus burst a seed-pod of Abolition. This propagative influence had been in Garrison's pamphlet. That pamphlet evoked, it elicited, it agitated. When we come later to review

Garrison's writings, let us remember what these writings accomplished. Let us remember that, however tedious this pamphlet on Colonization may seem to us, however dead it may fall, under criticism, to-day, it had this life-giving quality in its own time.

Another of the early picturesque episodes of Anti-slavery history was the case of Prudence Crandall. It set the world ringing, and caused new champions to step forward, fully armed, out of that mystical wood which ever fringes the open lawns where heroes are at combat.

I again quote from Oliver Johnson:

"In 1832, Prudence Crandall, a Quaker young woman of high character, established in Canterbury, Windham County, Conn., a school for young ladies. Now there was in that town a respectable colored farmer named Harris, who had a daughter, a bright girl of seventeen, who, having passed creditably through one of the district schools, desired to qualify herself to be a teacher of colored children. She was a girl of pleasing appearance and manners, a member of the Congregational church, and of a hue not darker than that of some persons who pass for white. Miss Crandall, good Quaker that she was, admitted this girl to

her school. The pupils, some of whom had been associated with her in the district school, made no objection; but some of the parents were offended, and demanded the removal of the dark-skinned pupil. Miss Crandall made a strong appeal in behalf of the girl, and did her best to overcome the prejudices of the objectors, but in vain. After reflection she came to the conclusion, from a sense of duty, to open her school to other girls of a dark complexion. The announcement of her purpose threw the whole town into a ferment. A town-meeting was held in the Congregational church, and so fierce was the excitement that the Rev. Samuel J. May and Mr. Arnold Buffum, the Quaker President of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, who had been deputed by Miss Crandall to speak for her, were denied a hearing."

Why has this woman no tablet? Will the annals of Canterbury, Connecticut, show a more heroic figure during the next thousand years,— that the hamlet waits to celebrate its patron saint? Had Prduence Crandall lived in the time of Diocletian, or in the time of Savonarola, or in the time of Garibaldi, she would have had a shrine to which Americans would have flocked to-

day. Not without immense influence was the stand she made. It cost two years of struggle, during which the Slave Power, as we have seen, passed such bills to suppress her as, in the rebound, weakened its hold on the people of the North. We now find it hard to imagine that, in 1834, it should have been a crime in Connecticut to give primary education to colored girls. Yet such was the case. Prudence Crandall was indicted.

At her first trial there was a disagreement of the jury. Upon the second she was convicted. An appeal was thereupon taken and was followed by a disagreement among the judges. Thereafter the matter was allowed to drop, through the finding of a flaw in the indictment. All this, however, was not done in a corner, nor without the indignation of all warm-hearted people, nor without the exhibition of splendid legal ability on both sides of the contest. Important law-suits were the bull-fights of America before the war. This one called into being a new local newspaper, supported by Arthur Tappan, because the existing papers would publish only the Pro-slavery side of the contest. It called into activity also several new propagandists of the first order,

including C. C. Burleigh, who was turned from the career of a brilliant advocate and was transformed for life into an evangelist of liberty, through the courage of this woman. Her story showed the lengths to which the Slave Power not only would but *could* go at the North, and gave a glance into the burning pit, which even casual and callous persons could not forget.

It was while this long contest was in progress that the National Anti-slavery Society was formed by a meeting at Philadelphia of about sixty Abolitionists, from eleven states. How young these men were may be judged by the fact that forty-five of them survived to witness the emancipation of the slaves thirty years later. I quote a few paragraphs from Samuel J. May's reminiscences, which picture the state of mind of these men as their deliberations of several days drew to a close. The men had, for the most part, never seen each other before this meeting. A declaration of principles had been prepared.

"Between twelve and one o'clock," says Mr. May, "we repaired with the *Declaration* to the hall. Edwin P. Atlee, the chairman, read it to the Convention. Never in my life have I seen a deeper impression

made by words than was made by that admirable document upon all who were there present. . . .

"At the suggestion of an Orthodox brother, and without a vote of the Convention, our President himself, then an Orthodox minister, readily condescended to the scruples of our Quaker brethren, so far as not to *call upon* any individual to offer prayer; but at the opening of our sessions each day he gave notice that a portion of time would be spent in prayer. Any one prayed aloud who was moved to do so. It was at the suggestion also of an Orthodox member that we agreed to dispense with all titles, civil or ecclesiastical. Accordingly, you will not find in the published minutes of the Convention appendages to any names,— neither D. D., nor Rev., nor Hon., nor Esq., — no, not even plain Mr. We met as fellow-men, in the cause of suffering fellow-men. . . .

"I cannot describe the holy enthusiasm which lighted up every face as we gathered around the table on which the Declaration lay, to put our names to that sacred instrument. It seemed to me that every man's heart was in his hand,— as if every one felt that he was about to offer himself a

living sacrifice in the cause of *freedom,* and to do it cheerfully. There are moments when heart touches heart, and souls flow into one another. That was such a moment. I was in them and they in me; we were all one. There was no need that each should tell the other how he felt and what he thought, for we were in each other's bosoms. I am sure there was not, in all our hearts, the thought of ever making violent, much less mortal, defense of the liberty of speech, or the freedom of the press, or of our own persons, though we foresaw that they all would be grievously outraged. Our President, Beriah Green, in his admirable closing speech, gave utterance to what we all felt and intended should be our course of conduct. He distinctly foretold the obloquy, the despiteful treatment, the bitter persecution, perhaps even the cruel deaths we were going to encounter in the prosecution of the undertaking to which we had bound ourselves."

The age played its part quite handsomely in apportioning persecution to the new preachers of the Gospel. The case of Amos Dresser may be cited as a sample from Oliver Johnson:

"Amos Dresser, a young theological stu-

dent (a native of Berkshire County, Mass.), went to Nashville, Tenn., in the summer of 1835, to sell the 'Cottage Bible.' His crime was that he was a member of an anti-slavery society, and that he had some anti-slavery tracts in his trunk. *For this he was flogged in the public square of the city,* under the direction of a Vigilance Committee, composed of the most distinguished citizens, some of them prominent members of churches. He received twenty lashes on the bare back from a cowskin. On the previous Sunday he had received the bread and wine of the communion from the hands of one of the members of that Vigilance Committee! Another member of the Committee was a prominent Methodist, whose house was the resort of the preachers and bishops of his denomination."

Now Dresser was a Massachusetts man. One wonders how the slaveholders would have behaved if a Southerner had, for any cause whatever, been treated in Massachusetts as Dresser was treated in Tennessee. But the North made no complaints. It is incredible — and this is the difficulty which the whole epoch presents to us,— it is incredible that the earth should ever have nurtured such a race of cowards as the dom-

inant classes in our Northern States seem to have been. And yet we know they were no worse, nor very different from other persons recorded in history; they furnish merely an acute, recent example of how self-interest can corrupt character, of how tyranny can delude intellect. The sufferings of such persons as Dresser are never lost. It required just such exhibitions as this to make the North see to what depths it had sunk. For many years, however, the North could draw no inference from such cases, except this: — that persons like Dresser were misguided fools, who interfered with matters best left alone.

The next picture must be of another kind. It shall be of the young Puritan divine, Samuel J. May, a descendant of the Sewalls and Quincys and of all that Eighteenth Century New England aristocracy of learning and virtue, which seems to have dwindled and withered in a single generation, and left,— except for one or two bright spirits,— nothing but shadow-characters, and feeble-natured persons on the stage. The occasion of May's conversion was Garrison's first Boston address, which was given in 1830 in Julien Hall, the hall being lent for the purpose by an associa-

tion of avowed infidels. Garrison had but recently denounced the principles of these men; for at this time he was intensely orthodox. The lesson in charity he thus received from opponents must have been salutary, even to him. The whole incident, including May's conversion, shows how closely knitted together are all the liberal impulses in a community. At this time May was thirty-three. His family besought him to shun the new fanaticism; but he put their counsels gently aside. May is the angel of Anti-slavery. He gives the following account of his conversion:

"Presently the young man (Garrison) arose, modestly, but with an air of calm determination, and delivered such a lecture as he only, I believe, at that time, could have written; for he only had had his eyes so anointed that he could see that outrages perpetrated upon Africans were wrongs done to our common humanity; he only, I believe, had had his ears so completely unstopped of 'prejudice against color' that the cries of enslaved black men and black women sounded to him as if they came from brothers and sisters.

"He began with expressing deep regret and shame for the zeal he had lately mani-

fested in the Colonization cause. It was, he confessed, a zeal without knowledge. He had been deceived by the misrepresentations so diligently given, throughout the free States by Southern agents, of the design and tendency of the Colonization scheme. During his few months' residence in Maryland he had been completely undeceived. He had there found out that the design of those who originated, and the especial intentions of those in the Southern States that engaged in the plan, were to remove from the country, as 'a disturbing element' in slaveholding communities, all the free colored people, so that the bondmen might the more easily be held in subjection. He exhibited in graphic sketches and glowing colors the suffering of the enslaved, and denounced the plan of Colonization as devised and adapted to perpetuate the system, and intensify the wrongs of American slavery, and therefore utterly undeserving of the patronage of lovers of liberty and friends of humanity.

"Never before was I so affected by the speech of man. When he had ceased speaking I said to those around me: 'That is a providential man; he is a prophet; he will shake our nation to its center, but he will

shake slavery out of it. We ought to know him, we ought to help him. Come, let us go and give him our hands.' Mr. Sewall and Mr. Alcott went up with me, and we introduced each other. I said to him: 'Mr. Garrison, I am not sure that I can indorse all you have said this evening. Much of it requires careful consideration. But I am prepared to embrace you. I am sure you are called to a great work and I mean to help you.'"

With a mind as acute as a lawyer's, and a spirit as unselfish as a seraph's, May plunged into the cause. It is he who appeared upon the scene to protect and to represent Prudence Crandall at the meeting of her townsfolk which it was not safe for her to attend. It is he who has left us the best short book on the early years of the movement, from which book many of these illustrations are taken. He was of milder speech than Garrison. "O my friend," cried May at the close of an expostulation with Garrison, "do try to moderate your indignation, and keep more cool; why, you are all on fire." Garrison stopped, laid his hand on May's shoulder with a kind but emphatic pressure, and said slowly: "Brother May, I have need to be *all on fire,*

for I have mountains of ice about me to melt." "From that time to this," adds Mr. May, "I have never said a word to Mr. Garrison in complaint of his style. I am more than half satisfied that he was right then, and we who objected were mistaken."

May was not so political-minded as Garrison; he had not Garrison's strategic understanding of the fight, nor Garrison's gift of becoming the central whirpool of idea and of persecution. But he was the diviner spirit of the two. I do not think Garrison could have made the following appeal. It moves in a region of humility which is foreign to Garrison's nature, to his tactics and to his genius. Dr. Channing had been a family friend of the Mays, and had been particularly kind to Samuel when the latter was a small boy. This affectionate relationship had never been shaken. The story must be told by May himself.

"Late in the year 1834," says Mr. May, "being on a visit in Boston, I spent several hours with Dr. Channing in earnest conversation upon Abolitionism and Abolitionists. My habitual reverence for him was such that I had always been apt to defer perhaps too readily to his opinions, or not to

make a very stout defense of my own when they differed from his. But at the time to which I refer I had become so thoroughly convinced of the truth of the essential doctrines of the American Anti-slavery Society, and so earnestly engaged in the dissemination of them that our conversation assumed, more than it had ever done, the character of a debate. He acknowledged the inestimable importance of the object we had in view. The evils of Slavery, he assented, could not be overstated. He allowed that removal to Africa ought not to be made a condition of the liberation of the enslaved. But he hesitated still to accept the doctrine of immediate emancipation. His principal objections, however, were alleged against the severity of our denunciations, the harshness of our epithets, the vehemence, heat, and excitement caused by the harangues at our meetings, and still more by Mr. Garrison's *Liberator*. The Doctor dwelt upon these objections, which, if they were as well founded as he assumed them to be, lay against what was only incidental, not an essential part of our movement. He dwelt upon them until I became impatient, and, forgetting for the moment my wonted deference, I broke out with not a

little warmth of expression and manner:

"'Dr. Channing,' I said, 'I am tired of these complaints. The cause of suffering humanity, the cause of our oppressed, crushed colored countrymen, has called as loudly upon others as upon us Abolitionists. It was just as incumbent upon others as upon us to espouse it. *We* are not to blame that wiser and better men did not espouse it long ago. The cry of millions, suffering the cruel bondage in our land, had been heard for half a century and disregarded. "The wise and prudent" saw the terrible wrong, but thought it not wise and prudent to lift a finger for its correction. The priests and Levites beheld their robbed and wounded countrymen, but passed by on the other side. The children of Abraham held their peace, and at last "the very stones have cried out" in abhorrence of this tremendous iniquity; and you must expect them to cry out like "the stones." You must not wonder if many of those who have been left to take up this great cause, do not plead it in all that seemliness of phrase which the scholars and practiced rhetoricians of our country might use. You must not expect them to manage with all the calmness and discretion that clergymen and

statesmen might exhibit. But the scholars, the statesmen, the clergy had done nothing, — did not seem about to do anything, and for my part I thank God that at last any persons, be they who they may, have earnestly engaged in this cause; for no *movement* can be in vain. We Abolitionists are what we are,— babes, sucklings, obscure men, silly women, publicans, sinners, and we shall manage this matter just as might be expected of such persons as we are. It is unbecoming in abler men who stood by and would do nothing to complain of us because we do no better.

" 'Dr. Channing,' I continued with increased earnestness, 'it is not *our fault* that those who might have conducted this great reform more prudently have left it to us to manage as we may. It is not *our fault* that those who might have pleaded for the enslaved so much more wisely and eloquently, both with the pen and the living voice than we can, have been silent. We are not to blame, sir, that you, who, more perhaps than any other man, might have so raised the voice of remonstrance that it should have been heard throughout the length and breadth of the land,— we are not to blame, sir, that you have not so

spoken. And now that inferior men have been compelled to speak and act against what you acknowledge to be an awful system of iniquity, it is not becoming in you to complain of us because we do it in an inferior style. Why, sir, have you not taken this matter in hand yourself? Why have you not spoken to the nation long ago, as you, better than any other one, could have spoken?'

"At this point I bethought me to whom I was administering this rebuke,— the man who stood among the highest of the great and good in our land,— the man whose reputation for wisdom and sanctity had become world-wide,— the man, too, who had ever treated me with the kindness of a father, and whom, from my childhood, I had been accustomed to revere more than any one living. I was almost overwhelmed with a sense of my temerity. His countenance showed that he was much moved. I could not suppose he would receive all I had said very graciously. I waited his reply in painful expectation. The minutes seemed very long that elapsed before the silence was broken. Then in a very subdued manner and in the kindliest tones of his voice he said, 'Brother May, I acknowledge the jus-

tice of your reproof. I have been silent too long.' Never shall I forget his words, look and whole appearance. I then and there saw the beauty, the magnanimity, the humility of a truly great Christian soul. He was exalted in my esteem more even than before."

Surely this is as moving an appeal as one man ever made to another; and the figures of May and Channng seem to stand as in a bas-relief symbolizing the old and the new generation. Are the caverns of Anti-slavery controversy strewn with fragments of such marble as this? I know that Emerson used to say that eloquence was dog-cheap at Anti-slavery meetings; but I did not expect to find gestures so sublime or episodes so moving. The figures of Hebrew history,— of Jacob and Joseph, of Nathan and David, of Hagar and Ishmael,— rise before us in their solemn, soul-subduing reality; and are one in spirit with these Anti-slavery scenes.

My shelves are lined with books about Saint Francis of Assisi; my walls are papered with photographs of men of genius in Florence, and of saints in Sienna. I desire also to remember the saints of New England. We Americans are digging for art and for intellect in Troy, in Sardis and in

Egypt. Let us sometimes also dig in the old records of our own towns; and, while doing so, let us pray that mind be given us to understand what we bring to light.

In the year following his interview with May (1836), Dr. Channing published his famous pamphlet on Slavery, which was of enormous value to the Anti-slavery cause, though it did not coincide with Abolition opinion. It condemned Slavery to heart's content, but did not advocate immediate action. The engines of rationalism and the fountains of morality were by Channing turned upon the entire subject. This was no half-work: it was thorough. Channing's name carried the book into houses, both at the North and in the South where no Abolition literature could penetrate; and made it a mile-stone in the progress of Anti-slavery. Its most lasting importance to posterity, however, is that it proves Channing's courage, and shows that his occasional subserviency toward his Trustees was not due to a defect in his nature, but to a defect in his education, a defect in his vision. Could the matter have been explained to his mind through the elaborate machinery of his own philosophy, he would have broken his chains. There

are plenty of people to whom the crucial problems of their own lives never get presented in terms that they can understand.

Abolitionists were, of course, not satisfied with Channing's pamphlet; for he could not sanction their views; and indeed he repeated many of the commonplace charges against them,— e. g., "that the Abolitionists exaggerated the importance of their cause; that they sent their literature to the slave; that their language was too violent,"— etc. Most of these charges appear to-day to contradict the main thesis of the book, and to record merely the nervous petulance of that age.

The Slave Barons and their Boston friends were cut to the heart by Channing's essay. They denounced him as an even more dangerous enemy than Garrison. If, at times, we feel dissatisfied with Channing's caution, we should remember that he was a middle-aged man when these problems arose. Channing was born in 1780; and Anti-slavery was an agony in the blood of young men, in 1829.

I have referred to John Quincy Adams' detestation of slavery. He was, however, never an Abolitionist, and he did not even favor the abolition of slavery in the District

of Columbia. For this latter opinion he had the most fantastic reason; namely that, although the residents of the District had no votes, and were governed by Congress, nevertheless he felt himself to be all the more bound in honor to act during his term in Congress as if he were the representative chosen by the people of that District; that is, to act according to what he knew to be the will of his *quasi* constituents. But, for his *real* constituents he held no such reverence, and in his dealings with them he was governed by his own conscience. Such are the vagaries of men.

The romantic, extravagant nature of this man was, at an early age, put in irons to law, diplomacy, politics, and administrative duty. He was a born agitator, who appeared at a time when his peculiar talents were not demanded by the age. In John Quincy Adams' boyhood all the talents and energies of this country were required for the assembling, setting in motion, and keeping together of the machineries of our new Government. There was no demand for an agitator, whose function is always to displace, to disperse, and to pull apart. And thus it happened with John Quincy Adams that he was never young till he was old.

The opportunity to exercise his extraordinary talents for agitation came when he took his seat in Congress toward the close of his long, brilliant career. He proceeded to focus the entire attention of the country upon one or two points of parliamentary procedure.

Now an agitator is a man who is willing to make use of the members of government, not only for the various purposes for which they are framed, as, e. g.— the Legislature to legislate, the Judiciary to adjudicate, the Executive to administer, etc.,— but this man makes use of any or all of them as a machine to spread an idea. He uses the forms of government as an educational apparatus. The branch of the Anti-slavery cause which it became Adams' fate to develop, was the conflict between Slavery and the right to petition. The policy of the Slave Power was to smother all petitions upon the subject of Slavery which came before Congress, by laying them upon the table unread. During half a dozen years Adams fought this fight practically alone. If we picture to ourselves a man who had grown up with the country, who had the most intimate recondite, passionate knowledge of its constitutional law, dedicating himself to the

plainest proposition regarding free speech, and proclaiming it in the face of a howling but comparatively unlettered majority, who seethed, and raged, and raved about him like the waves about a light-house — we have John Quincy Adams at an age of over seventy, presenting the Abolition petitions in Congress. His figure is part of the Anti-slavery struggle. It is clear to our instinct that if Adams did not have Abolition in his veins, he had something almost as good; he had the thing that Abolition was the sign of, namely, courage. His peculiar kind of courage was, in one sense, not as good as Abolition; for it was not an elixir. It would never have abolished slavery: it was not self-perpetuating. It would have died with him. Yet the passion within him, which he cloaked under the name of Free Speech, was in reality the Will to Pity, the Will to Love, the Will to express freely that emotional side of man's nature with which he himself was so richly endowed. This is why the last page of this man's life lifts him into a new kind of greatness. It makes no difference what he did before this era. His service to the Abolition cause was proportionate to his position. His conduct showed the country what slavery pointed to, and

demonstrated also the conservative nature of Abolition. It showed that Abolition was at one with the foundations of society. The aristocracy of Boston, during these years, regarded John Quincy Adams as an *enfant terrible;* but the people of Massachusetts stood by him and, in the end, rallied to congratulate him at a monster meeting. Human nature could not withhold its tribute of admiration.

George Thompson, an Englishman, whose life had been devoted to the cause of Anti-slavery in the British colonies, and who was one of the greatest popular orators of that day, had done more than any one man to abolish West Indian Slavery; and it was natural that Garrison, who went to England in 1833 for conference with the victorious British Abolitionists, should enlist Thompson in the American cause and bring him to America. Upon the passage of the Act abolishing Slavery in the West Indies, Lord Brougham had risen in the House of Lords and said: "I rise to take the crown of this most glorious victory from every other head, and place it upon George Thompson's. He has done more than any other man to achieve it."

One can imagine how the Americans of

1833, who set a price on the heads of their own compatriots when they were Abolitionists, would welcome the most powerful, the most popular living advocate of the hated cause,— a stranger and an Englishman. Thompson was mobbed and hounded, threatened, insulted, and would have been killed if fate had assisted ever so little by lending the opportunity. I shall content myself with giving Mr. May's description of Thompson's eloquence.

" Mr. Thompson then went on to give us a graphic, glowing account of the long and fierce conflict they had had in England for the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies. His eloquence rose to a still higher order. His narrative became *a continuous metaphor,* admirably sustained. He represented the Anti-slavery enterprise in which he had been so long engaged as a stout, well-built ship, manned by a noble-hearted crew, launched upon a stormy ocean, bound to carry inestimable relief to 800,000 sufferers in a far-distant land. He clothed all kinds of opposition they had met, all the difficulties they had contended with, in imagery suggested by the observation and experience of the voyager across the Atlantic in the most tempestuous season of the year. In

the height of his descriptions, my attention was withdrawn from the emotions enkindled in my own bosom sufficiently to observe the effect of his eloquence upon half a dozen boys, of twelve or fourteen years of age, sitting together not far from the platform. They were completely possessed by it. When the ship reeled or plunged or staggered in the storms, they unconsciously went through the same motions. When the enemy attacked her, the boys took the liveliest part in battle,— manning the guns, or handing shot and shell, or pressing forward to repulse the boarders. When the ship struck upon an iceberg, the boys almost fell from their seats in the recoil. When the sails and topmasts were well-nigh carried away by the gale, they seemed to be straining themselves to prevent the damage; and when at length the ship triumphantly sailed into her destined port with colors flying and signals of glad tidings floating from her topmast, and the shout of welcome rose from thousands of expectant freedmen on the shore, the boys gave three loud cheers, 'Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!' This irrepressible explosion of their feelings brought them at once to themselves. They blushed,

covered their faces, sank down on their seats, one of them upon the floor."

It was one thing for the American to thrill for the liberty of Greece, Poland, or Hungary; and another to allow foreign enthusiasts to thrill over American Anti-slavery. Thompson was marked for assassination and kidnapping; and a gibbet was erected for him in Boston. It was Thompson whom the mob were in search of when they caught Garrison at the meeting of the Female Anti-slavery Society, soon to be described. The impertinence of Thompson consisted in his being a foreigner, and this fact played upon the peculiar American weakness,— our sensitiveness to foreign opinion. "He comes here from the dark corrupt institutions of Europe," said Mr. Sprague in Faneuil Hall, "to enlighten *us* upon the rights of man and the moral duties of our own condition. Received by our hospitality, he stands here upon our soil, protected by our laws, and hurls 'firebrands, arrows and death' into the habitations of our neighbors, and friends, and brothers; and when he shall have kindled a conflagration which is sweeping in desolation over the land, he has only to embark for his own country, and there

look serenely back with indifference or exultation upon the widespread ruin by which *our* cities are wrapt in flames, and *our* garments rolled in blood. . . . If the storm comes, *we* must abide its pelting; if convulsions come, *we* must be in the midst of them. To *us,* then, it belongs to judge of the exigencies of our own condition, to provide for our own safety, and perform our own duties without the audacious interference of foreign emissaries."

I am grateful to this man, George Thompson. He stood for courage in 1835 in Massachusetts. He typified courage also at a later time during the Civil War when he stood with John Bright and W. E. Foster as the expounders of the cause of the North before the people of Great Britain. He was one of the friends of the United States to whom it is due that England's governing classes did not assist the South openly, and thereby give rise to an age-long, never-dying antagonism between England and America. I am glad that George Thompson lived to be thanked by Lincoln and his Cabinet, and to be ceremoniously received in a House of Representatives thronged with the best intellects and hearts in America.

V

THE CRISIS

I HAVE given the foregoing sketches almost at random, and, where possible, in the words of others, in order to call up the decade between 1830 and 1840 without myself feeling the responsibility of a historian, and without asking the reader to give a chronological attention. Facts often speak for themselves more truly, the less we explain them; and the philosophy of history is perhaps a delusion.

It was between 1830 and 1840 that the real work of Garrison was done. At the beginning of that decade Abolition was a cry in the wilderness: at the end of it, Abolition was a part of the American mind. Garrison's occupation throughout the epoch was to tend his engine — his *Liberator*, — and to assist in the formation of Anti-slavery Societies. Every breath of the movement was chronicled in the *Liberator*, every new convert wrote to Garrison for help. Garrison was the focus, the exchange, the center

and heart of Anti-slavery activity. He was the channel into which the new streams flowed. If a drop of Abolition fell from the sky anywhere in America, it was found in the *Liberator* upon the following morning. This drawing of the new men into a knowledge of each other made magical heat. Every Abolition act or thought went immediately into the general Abolition consciousness. It was Garrison who caused the heat-lightning of 1825 to turn into the thunderbolts of 1835. His gift of doing this was his greatness.

We must imagine Garrison then, as always, behind and underneath the machinery and in touch with all the forces at work, writing away at his terrible *Liberator,*— fomenting, rebuking, retorting, supporting, expounding, thundering, scolding. The continuousness of Garrison is appalling, and fatigues even the retrospective imagination of posterity: he is like an all-night hotel: he is possessed: he is like something let loose. I dread the din of him. I cover my head and fix my mind on other things; but there is Garrison hammering away, till he catches my eye and forces me to attend to him. If Garrison can do this to me, who am protected from dread of him by

eighty years of intervening time, think how his lash must have fallen upon the thin skins of our ancestors!

Garrison, then, and his propaganda went forward; the South under its resentment swelled and fretted, and every phase of the matter was day by day recorded in the *Liberator,* which remains as the inexhaustible coal bed and historical deposit of these things. Every leaf and twig, every letter, every quarrel, every prayer, is here preserved in the immortality of petrifaction. To be in himself the focalization and to leave behind him the fossilization of that wonderful epoch was Garrison's function.

The crisis in the struggle came in 1835-6, when a great attempt was seriously made by the whole organized force of the Slave Power to put down the Abolitionists. This suppression was to be done in the ordinary, historic way,— through laws to be made against them, and through violence, where law fell short. It will be seen in an instant that law was, throughout, on the side of the Abolitionists; and this is the reason why the violence was so great. The South could not get at Garrison through sheriffs and jailers. Therefore it was

tempted to resort to riots and extra-legal terrorism. It was lured into the fabrication of myths,— as for instance, the myth that the constitution protected slavery against adverse opinion, the myth that the Abolitionists favored slave-insurrection, the myth that the language of the Abolitionists was so extreme as to make them the enemies of society, the exceedingly absurd myth that to send Anti-slavery publications through the United States mails directed to adult white men in the South was, somehow, an atrocious outrage.

The truth is that between 1830 and 1835, the element of passion was rising past the danger point, and running into something like insanity in the Southern mind. A madman believes his own logic, and ever drives it further. The failure of law to protect the South left no accurate demarcation as to their demands. At the beginning, the slave-holders protested that Garrison should be silenced, because he was a fanatic; but before long they were demanding that the Abolitionists should be hanged, and were mingling the name of Channing in their execrations. In the beginning they demanded only to be let alone; but before long they were swearing that the South should

buy and sell slaves underneath Bunker Hill monument.

This tidal fury could not be conciliated. Anything that threatened the existence of Slavery stimulated the fury — and the time had come when all nature began to threaten Slavery. Slavery began, in fact, to stalk abroad and horrify the world: Slavery came out of its lair. At first there were meetings in the South, destruction of Abolition literature in the mails; then white Vigilance Committees, and State legislatures called, in chorus, upon the North to stop the plague of Abolition by the enactment of stringent laws against the reformers. A giant demonstration was planned by the friends of the South to take place at Faneuil Hall in Boston — 1500 names being appended to the call for the meeting. This meeting was to demonstrate the good faith of the North towards the slaveholders, and to give public opinion a set towards the enactment of criminal statutes against Anti-slavery. The meeting was a tremendous success and proved to be a sort of "view-halloo" for Slavery. It was naturally followed by an increase of riots and mob violence against the Abolitionists. The most important of the new ebullitions was the so called Boston

mob (October 21, 1835), which led Garrison about with a rope round him,— and might easily have ended in his death. General Jackson, the President of the United States, referred to the recent Pro-slavery demonstration at the North in his Message to Congress, in December, 1835.

"It is fortunate for the country," he says, "that the good sense, the generous feeling, and the deep-rooted attachment of the people of the non-slaveholding States to the Union, and to their fellow citizens of the same blood in the South, have given so strong and inpressive a tone to the sentiments entertained against the proceedings of the misguided persons who have engaged in these unconstitutional and wicked attempts ['to circulate through the mails inflammatory appeals addressed to the passions of the slaves']."

Here was support from high quarters. It was not till January, 1836, that the time came for Edward Everett, Governor of Massachusetts, to take notice of the entreaties of the Southern States. In his Message to the Massachusetts Legislature he intimated that the Abolitionists could be punished under the law as it stood: because "whatever by direct and necessary operation is calcula-

ted to excite insurrection among slaves may be prosecuted as a misdemeanor at common law." This part of his Message was referred to a joint Committee of Five of the Legislature, together with the Southern entreaties. It was in the hearings before this committee, that the work was done which put an end to Southern hopes of enslaving Massachusetts. The great attempt was foiled. The South had done its utmost to suppress Abolition, and had failed. After this time, Abolition is in the field as an accepted fact. Within eight years thereafter, in 1844, Birney was nominated for the Presidency as the candidate of a third party.

We must think of this whole Southern movement as a big, mountainous wave, involving multitudinous lesser waves and eddies, which, as it rolled forward and surged back, created complex disturbances, all interlocked with one another. The power of the South was exerted over the President at Washington and over the ruffian on the street corner, and it was all one power, one pull together, one control. Let us take a rapid but clear glance over certain stages of the movement which have already been mentioned. The popular feeling at the South, which was the motive power of the whole

affair, may be illustrated in a paragraph from the *Richmond Whig:*

"Let the hell-hounds of the North beware. Let them not feel too much security in their homes, or imagine that they who throw firebrands, although from, as they think, so safe a distance, will be permitted to escape with impunity. There are thousands now animated with a spirit to brave every danger to bring these felons to justice on the soil of the Southern States, whose women and children they have dared to endanger by their hell-concocted plots. We have *feared* that Southern exasperation would seize some of the prime conspirators in their very beds, and drag them to meet the punishment due their offenses. We fear it no longer. We hope it may be so, and our applause as one man shall follow the successful enterprise."

This then is the outer ring of fiery feeling which dreamed of moving Northward and doing, it knew not what, to put down Abolition. The spirit of violence, as shown, for instance, in the breaking into of the United States Post-office at Charleston, S. C., and the seizing of Abolition newspapers for a bonfire, was redoubled by the attitude of the Federal authorities. The United States

Postmaster General, Amos Kendall, a Massachusetts man, approved the deed. Now, the only reason why riots do not occur every day, accompanied by destruction of property and injury to unoffending persons, is that the strong arm of law and order is against the ubiquitous loafer and ruffian. Once let this gentleman see a chance of rioting with impunity, and he instantly appears and riots. How easily then did disturbances follow when State and National officials, as well as the rich and respectable classes, gave the cue. The average man at the time we are chronicling really believed that the Abolitionist was a criminal in essence, and ought to be proclaimed as such by law.

The Anti-slavery writers, in describing this period, use the terminology of fiercer times. Harriet Martineau calls it a "Martyr Age," and we constantly hear of the "reign of terror" in 1835. Now the term "persecution" is apt to call up in our minds the fiercest images of history, scenes of bloodshed and tyranny, combats with wild beasts in the amphitheater, executions in the market-place, men driven to hide in caves in the rocks, etc. The unpleasantnesses and injustices to which the Abolitionists were

subjected never justified a literal application of the terms "martyr," "reign of terror," etc.; but the word "persecution" is most aptly used to describe their sufferings, if we reflect that there are persecutions which do not result in death. Prudence Crandall was certainly persecuted; the Abolitionist was harassed and his life was made as uncomfortable as the law would permit. The outrages, both legal and extra legal, which fell upon anti-slavery people, may be studied at leisure in the press of the time. They lie upon any page of the history of that day. The following are severe cases. They are mentioned in the large life of Garrison:

"Dr. Reuben Crandall, a perfectly innocent man and younger brother of Prudence Crandall, was thrown into a noisome jail in Georgetown, in the District of Columbia, on a charge of 'circulating Tappan, Garrison & Company's papers, encouraging the negroes to insurrection,' for which a mob would fain have lynched him. . . . It was nearly a year before he was brought to trial, and meantime his health had been ruined."

"Five thousand dollars were offered on the Exchange in New York for the head of Arthur Tappan on Friday last," writes

Henry Benson to Garrison. "Elizur Wright is barricading his house with shutters, bars and bolts."

"How imminent is the danger that hovers about the persons of our friends George Thompson and Arthur Tappan!" writes Garrison to George Benson. "Rewards for the seizure of the latter are multiplying — in one place they offer three thousand dollars *for his ears* — a purse has been made up, publicly, of $20,000, in New Orleans for his person. I, too,— I desire to bless God,— am involved in almost equal peril. I have have just received a letter written evidently by a friendly hand, in which I am apprised that 'my life is sought after, and a reward of $20,000 has been offered for my head by six Mississippians.' He says — 'Beware of the assassin! May God protect you!' and signs himself 'A Marylander, and a resident of Philadelphia.'"

"Typical cases were the town-meeting appointment of a vigilance committee to prevent Anti-slavery meetings in Canaan, N. H.; the arrest of the Rev. George Storrs, at Northfield, in the same State, in a friendly pulpit, at the close of a discourse on slavery, as a 'common brawler,' and his subsequent sentence by a 'justice of the peace' to hard

labor in the House of Correction for three months (not sustained on appeal); and the repeated destruction of Birney's *Philanthropist* printing-office by the 'gentlemen of property and standing' in Cincinnati — an outrage bearing a close resemblance to that engendered by the Faneuil Hall meeting, and ending in a midnight raid upon the colored homes of the city, with the connivance of the mayor."

As for mere social ostracism,— the refusal on the part of Beacon Street to ask Wendell Phillips to dinner, the black-balling at the Clubs in New York of distinguished Abolitionists,— the Muse of History cannot record these things among her tragedies. We have seen, in the case of Henry I. Bowditch and his walk with Douglass, upon what plane the drama moved. It was a drama of character, rather than a drama of blood. The Anti-slavery people are, however, not inexcusable in calling this epoch "the reign of terror." It was, at any rate, a reign of brickbats and anathema, which developed here and there into tarring and feathering and murder. The reason why it did not turn into a veritable reign of terror, a time of proscription and execution, is that the middle classes at the North awoke out of

their lethargy, and protected the reformers instead of oppressing them. The passions were there; the introverted enthusiasm of the South and the martyr spirit of the Abolitionist were there. There also was the pliant tool between them — the Northern business man. This tool, however, broke.

The great meeting in Faneuil Hall, already spoken of, a meeting attended by numerous Southerners who made the journey to Boston on purpose, represents the apogee of the Sun of Liberty in America. In considering this meeting we are again baffled by the strangeness of its historic atmosphere; the low pulse of the Northerner is a puzzle to us. It is easy to understand and sympathize with the Southern tiger bereft of his prey, and with the Northern lamb who lifts up his voice for justice before being devoured. The first is the typical tyrant, and the second the typical saint. The conduct, however, of the Massachusetts Philistine, who looks like an educated gentleman and acts the part of a terrified servant, is a difficult thing to understand. We can get a sidelong glimpse into the mystery by remembering how people behave in moments of panic,— with what meanness, with what irrational thoughtlessness, with what denial of

their true selves. Now the Massachusetts statesmen, business men, and persons of distinction and wealth, had lived for years in a state of *continuous panic.* This had shredded them into spectres. It is quite true that there was a spiritual "reign of terror" at this epoch, a terror which intimately affected all classes, and the Abolitionists' phrase is thus truer than it seemed.

Peleg Sprague, one of Massachusetts' most distinguished men, a United States Senator and former Congressman, and a thoroughly representative mouthpiece of the Conservative classes at the North, spoke as follows at the memorable Pro-slavery meeting in Faneuil Hall:

"Time was, when . . . the generous and gallant Southrons came to our aid, and our fathers refused not to hold communion with slaveholders. . . . When *He,* that slaveholder (pointing to the full-length portrait of Washington), who from this canvas smiles upon you — his children — with paternal benignity, came with other slaveholders to drive the British myrmidons from this city and this hall, our father did not refuse to hold communion with him or them. With slaveholders they formed the Confederation, neither asking nor receiving any

right to interfere in their domestic relations; with them they made the Declaration of Independence, coming from the pen of that other slaveholder, Thomas Jefferson, a name dear to every friend of human rights. And in the original draft of that Declaration was contained a most eloquent passage upon this very topic of negro slavery, which was stricken out in deference to the wishes of members from the South."

There is something about this language so far removed from good sense that it gives us pause. That *something* is the influence of terror. Mr. Harrison Gray Otis, who moved on a still higher social plane than Sprague, nay, who stood very near the gods in the imagination of Bostonians, spoke as follows:

"I deny that any body of men can lawfully associate for the purpose of undermining, more than for overthrowing, the government of our sister States. There may be no statute to make such combinations penal, because the offense is of a new complexion."

Mr. Otis found an even stronger objection to the Society in "its evident direction towards becoming a political association, whose object it will be, and whose tendency

now is, to bear directly upon the ballot-boxes and to influence the elections," as in the recent case of Abbott Lawrence. "How soon might you see a majority in Congress returned under the influence of (Anti-slavery) associations?"

Otis' reasoning here is the chattering of teeth. "The ballot box and election!" — why not? The slavery issue to come into politics,— who can prevent it? Where are we? Who is talking? Have I read that sentence aright? Such questions go through one's mind no matter how often one re-reads these speeches. It must be confessed that a city is not far from chaos when so much passion and so faint a rationality can go forth as the voice of her powerful classes, and of her educated men. The situation was greatly alleviated by the good sense and calmness of the Abolitionists; for although Garrison's language was generally blatant, his conduct was invariably exemplary; and the reformers' course of action in legal and legislative maneuvering was often brilliant in the extreme.

The Boston Abolitionists behaved during this trying season with circumspection. After the Faneuil Hall demonstration, Mayor Lyman, who had presided at that

meeting, had, in a courteous if not friendly manner, privately counseled them to discontinue their meetings while the public mind was so heated, at the same time assuring them that he would protect them in their rights if they chose to exercise them. They therefore held only their constitutional meetings; and it was one of these which fell due on Wednesday, October 14, the anniversary of the formation of the Boston Female Anti-slavery Society. This meeting was postponed and duly advertised for October 21, 1835. On that day a Pro-slavery mob, organized by newspaper men and business men, and composed of from two to five thousand particularly respectable persons, was got together for the purpose of tarring and feathering George Thompson, who was believed to be at the meeting. As Thompson was not to be found, the mob cried out for Garrison. It surged into the women's meeting where Garrison was. For some time the thirty women went forward with their prayers and proceedings while the mob howled upon them. Garrison left the meeting in order to protect it, but could not escape from the building on account of the crowd. He therefore retreated across the hall to the Anti-slavery office which hap-

pened to be in the same building. Thither the crowd followed him.

"An assault," according to Garrison's account of the matter, "was now made upon the door of the office, the lower panel of which was instantly dashed to pieces. Stooping down and glaring upon me as I sat at the desk, writing an account of the riot to a distant friend, the ruffians cried out — 'There he is! That's Garrison! Out with the scoundrel!' etc., etc. Turning to Mr. Burleigh, I said — 'You may as well open the door, and let them come in and do their worst.' But he, with great presence of mind, went out, locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and by his admirable firmness succeeded in keeping the office safe."

Mayor Lyman now appeared upon the scene, and prevailed upon the women to adjourn. They passed down the staircase "amid manifestations of revengeful brutality" and so, in a close column, to the house of Francis Jackson, a new and powerful recruit to their cause. Mayor Lyman now had to deal with the mob. Their attention had been attracted to the Anti-slavery sign-board and Mayor Lyman permitted its demolition by the crowd, a betrayal of his trust as custodian of property and of the

peace which Garrison never forgave. The Mayor thereupon devoted his energies to helping Garrison to make good his escape from the mob. Garrison was induced to get out of a rear window, and one of the sheriffs, in order to persuade the crowd to disperse, announced that Garrison had escaped. The crowd, however, got on his track and followed after him. It came up with him in a carpenter's shop. The crowd was made up of both friends and foes.

"On seeing me," continues Garrison, "three or four of the rioters, uttering a yell, furiously dragged me to the window, with the intention of hurling me from that height to the ground; but one of them relented and said — 'Don't let us kill him outright.' So they drew me back, and coiled a rope about my body — probably to drag me through the streets. I bowed to the mob, and requesting them to wait patiently until I could descend, went down upon a ladder that was raised for that purpose. I fortunately extricated myself from the rope, and was seized by two or three powerful men, to whose firmness, policy and muscular energy I am probably indebted for my preservation. They led me along bareheaded (for I had

lost my hat), through a mighty crowd, ever and anon shouting, 'He shan't be hurt! You shan't hurt him! Don't hurt him! He is an American,' etc., etc. This seemed to excite sympathy among many in the crowd, and they reiterated the cry, 'He shan't be hurt!'"

At this point we will turn to Charles Burleigh's tale: "Going to the Post-office, I saw the crowd pouring out from Wilson's Lane into State Street with a deal of clamor and shouting, and heard the exulting cry, 'They've got him — they've got him.' And so, sure enough, they had. The tide set toward the south door of the City Hall, and in a few minutes I saw Garrison between two men who held him and led him along, while the throng pressed on every side, as if eager to devour him alive. His head was bare, his face a little more highly colored than in his most tranquil moments, as if flushed by moderate exercise, and his countenance composed." In the upshot, Mayor Lyman's efforts to save him were successful; and Garrison was forthwith jailed for the night as a disturber of the peace.

Throughout this episode Garrison acted with wisdom and courage. Had he behaved in any different manner, had he shown fight,

as Lovejoy did at Alton, had his followers become exasperated, bloodshed would probably have followed and the whole controversy in Boston would thenceforth have been overcast by the spirit of civil war. The thing to be noted is that Garrison's conduct during this mob was an exemplification of the whole Anti-slavery policy, which had been fully set out in the documents and literature of the movement during the preceding five years. Moral agitation with no resort to force, no resistance to force, was the Abolition watchword.

When a whole age is completely insane upon some subject, sane views upon that subject will seem like madness to the age. It was thus perfectly normal that the assembly of moderate and holy persons who met in Philadelphia to form the national Anti-slavery Society in 1833, and parted, as we have seen, with tears and prayers,—should have been both watched and guarded by the police. These men seemed to that age like dangerous malefactors. So also was it accordant with spiritual law that Garrison should have been shut up as a rioter on the night following the Boston mob. He was a man of little humor where his principles were at stake, and could see nothing in the

arrest but a ghastly paradox; whereas in reality that arrest is a charming epitome of the times.

How much danger was Garrison in while being dragged and hustled through the streets of Boston? Was there a pot of hot tar and a bath of feathers waiting at some convenient corner, which would have been produced and set in operation on the Common, but for Mayor Lyman's timely interference? Very likely there was. There seems to have been a plan to maltreat Thompson, which plan was divulged to the public through broadsides and to Garrison through anonymous letters, one of the letters being friendly. We see the Garrison mob to-day as the sticking-point of violence in Boston. We know that this mob was not followed by a series of mobs. We see that it did no damage to speak of; and therefore we cannot help thinking of it as a harmless affair. But a mob has always something devilish and incalculable in its action, and a mob led by gentlemen, a mob in which the ruffian saw that he was supported by the Bank President, and that no prosecution could possibly follow in the wake of the day, might be the most dangerous of all mobs. The experience of Birney and his press in

Ohio, of Lovejoy and his press in Illinois, the burning of Pennsylvania Hall in Philadelphia and countless other acts of violence show that the Abolitionists did right to be alarmed.

As a matter of fact they were seriously frightened. Though Garrison and the ladies put on as bold a front as they could, they did not feel like shaking hands with their old friend Mayor Lyman and regarding that mob as a joke. There was, after all, a real and terrific force at the back of the mob. It was the mob of the *Richmond Whig,* of the Faneuil Hall Pro-Slavery meeting. The Southern fire had moved North, and seemed to encircle the Anti-slavery agitators. The "gentlemen of property and standing" — to use the pompous newspaper phrase of the day,— who led the mob, were actuated by one of the major passions of humanity,— defense of property.

For in a big sense, in a metaphorical sense, the South was right; and all this Abolition movement was a servile uprising. The slave heart and soul had somehow come into communion with the Anti-slavery heart and soul, and together they were generating an earthquake beneath the slaver's feet. This whole religious message is mirrored in

"Uncle Tom's Cabin," a book which it took twenty years of Abolition to make the soil for. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" appeared in 1852 and is to-day our key to that whole epoch: but the vision of that book was in the heart of the Anti-slavery people long before. They gave that vision to the world; they gave it to Harriet Beecher. The pictures and thoughts of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" were sown into the mind of Harriet Beecher as a child; the emotion of it was generated in 1829. And so the early instinct to put down this whole movement as a servile insurrection had justification in fact.

As a general rule servile insurrections are put down by officials; by judges, sheriffs and troops. Historic reasons made this course not feasible at the North. Therefore the deluded upper classes of Boston, who had thrown in their fortunes with slavery, did what all determined men do when law fails them,— they took the field personally. The women who marched through the rioters trembled with antagonism, if not with fear. One of them wrote afterwards:

"When we emerged into the open daylight, there went up a roar of rage and contempt, which increased when they saw that we did not intend to separate, but walked

in regular procession. They slowly gave way as we came out. As far as we could look either way the crowd extended — evidently of the so-called 'wealthy and respectable,' 'the moral worth,' 'the influence and standing.' We saw the faces of those we had, till now, thought friends; men whom we never before met without giving the hand in friendly salutation; men whom till now we should have called upon for condemnation of ruffianism, with confidence that the appeal would be answered."

There is something old-world, something more like the Eighteenth Century than the Nineteenth in this scene; I would not miss it out of our history. But the people who took part in it could never think of it lightly. It was too real, too fierce, too dangerous. The mob was too near, and its genteel character was unpleasant. I have at times thought that the Anti-slavery people were almost ungrateful to Theodore Lyman. To them he was a man who had not done his duty; he should have protected their sign. He should have defied and dispersed the rioters, instead of conciliating the mob and dispersing the ladies' meeting. He should have jailed the ringleaders in the riot and conducted Garrison in safety to his home.

And yet, for an official during a great mania, and for a man by nature timid during a riot, he seems to me to have done fairly well. He appeared upon the scene of conflict, and in the end saved Garrison from the clutches of the mob. The Abolitionists, like lawyers in a jury case, never missed a point; and the points against Lyman were obvious. He was a pawn in their demonstration. It was their function to throw up a clear silhouette of the times, and to show just how far Theodore Lyman had fallen short of efficient courage, and Boston, of liberty. We cannot hold them to the historic perspective, nor expect them to display a judicial temper upon the matter.

I myself, however, feel grateful to Lyman for saving Garrison; though I also respect Garrison for not altering his criticism by an iota because of the personal question. He could not step aside for a moment and play the part of philosophic spectator. As well expect a point which is moving in a curve in obedience to an algebraical formula to change its course for reasons of politeness. Let us not forget that all these people were wound up, and that each man and each group of men in the struggle was following a track like one of

the heavenly bodies; being governed by a logic, unseen, mighty, and terrible, leading to greater things.

The Boston mob gives a barometrical record of conditions in the North in 1835. Every village had its Garrison, its Mayor Lyman, its Francis Jackson. Moved by the spectacle of Garrison's persecution, Charles Sumner, Henry I. Bowditch and Wendell Phillips became converts to the cause. Every village in the North after October 21, produced its Bowditch, its Sumner, its Phillips. There were now six State and three hundred auxiliary Anti-slavery Societies all formed since 1831. "So then," comments Garrison, "we derive from our opponents these instructive but paradoxical facts — that without numbers, we are multitudinous; that without power, we are sapping the foundations of the Confederacy; that without a plan, we are hastening the abolition of slavery; and without reason or talent we are rapidly converting the nation."

For the second time within three months it became wise for Garrison to leave Boston. His landlord, quite naturally, feared for the safety of his house. The printing-office of the *Liberator* was closed, and the

work was done clandestinely elsewhere. During this winter the Abolitionists kept rather quiet; but they emerged in the spring to attend the Lunt Committee,— that Committee appointed by Governor Everett to consider the requests from Southern legislatures that Massachusetts should do something to suppress Anti-slavery. The first hearing in the matter was held on March 4th, 1836, at the State House. The audience was so large that the Hall of the House of Representatives had to be used. Many women, including Harriet Martineau, were there, and the social, political and mercantile classes of Boston were represented. When the meeting came to order Samuel J. May set forth the history of Abolition and showed the mildness of its methods. Ellis Gray Loring, one of the earliest aristocrats to join the cause, reviewed the perfect legality of the ideals and conduct of the Anti-slavery Societies. The gentle Charles Follen, a learned and saintly man, began to expound the rights of man and to explain to the committee the natural sequence of cause and effect which existed between the Faneuil Hall Pro-slavery meeting in August and the treatment of Garrison by the mob in October. Chairman Lunt, who seems to have been a

narrow partisan who little understood the issue under discussion, and who thought it his duty towards his constituents to browbeat the reformers, declined to allow Follen to pursue this line of argument. The Abolitionists, upon this rebuff, brought the hearing promptly to a close, asserting that they must be allowed to make their own arguments or none. They immediately petitioned the Legislature for permission to argue their own case in their own way before the Committee. This militant front assumed by the little body of Protestants was a very able piece of tactics. Their real appeal was, of course, directed to the grand public,— not to the public of the city of Boston, but to the people of the State of Massachusetts who were watching the whole proceeding with passionate interest. Would the Legislature dare to refuse the Abolitionists permission to present their own arguments in their own way? The permission was granted.

The second hearing before the Lunt Committee was a stormy one. It was naturally crowded, because of the issues raised by the first. Mr. Lunt behaved, strange to say, with the same singular stupidity as at the first meeting. Let us remember that this

hearing was for the moment the center of the great storm of passion that had moved up from the South during the preceding year and by which it was hoped that the Abolition cause would be engulfed and obliterated. The center of the storm, however, is perfectly calm. The voice that comes from it is not a still small voice, but a very calm voice. It is the voice of Samuel J. May. "It seemed," said Mr. May, addressing the chairman, "it seemed on the 4th instant that the chairman considered that we came here by his grace to exculpate ourselves from the charges alleged against us by the legislatures of several of the Southern States; and that we were not to be permitted to express our anxious apprehensions of the effects of any acts by our Legislature intended to gratify the wishes of those States. In order, therefore, that we might appear before you in the *exercise of our right as free citizens,* we have appealed to the Senate and House of Representatives, and have their permission to do so. Dr. Follen was setting before you what we deem the most serious evil to be apprehended from any condemnatory resolutions which the Legislature might be induced to pass; and if he is not permitted to press this upon

your consideration our interview with the Committee must end here."

Mr. Follen was allowed by the chairman to proceed, but the following speaker, Rev. William Goodell, was compelled to sit down by the chairman. He was at the moment in the midst of a most telling quotation from Gov. McDuffy, of South Carolina, who had said that "the laboring population of no nation on earth are entitled to liberty or capable of enjoying it." "Sit down," said Mr. Lunt, "the Committee will hear no more of it." The Abolitionists immediately and meekly showed their compliance by beginning to leave the Hall.

This is magnificent agitation: it is impossible for reformers to be more able than this. Such conduct sends out an appeal to common sense, to justice, to fair play, to the mind of the average man and of the courageous person everywhere. And lo, before the Hall had emptied itself, there came a response to that appeal, a response from one whose mere name was a summary of the traditions he spoke for. "The audience here began to leave the Hall," continues Mr. May, "but were arrested by a voice in their midst. It was the voice of Gamaliel Bradford, not a member of the Anti-slavery So-

ciety, who had come there only as a spectator, but had been so moved by what he had witnessed that he pronounced an eloquent, thrilling, impassioned, but respectful appeal in favor of free discussion." When Bradford sat down Mr. George Bond, one of the most prominent merchants and estimable gentlemen of Boston, made a speech to the same effect.

Abolition thus began to penetrate the stalwart and sensible classes. It could no longer be regarded as merely the infatuation of foolish persons. There were still to be years of struggle, but the loneliness was at an end. The great shattering climax of all this period was the murder of Elijah P. Lovejoy, a young Presbyterian minister and native of Maine, on November 7th, 1837, at Alton, Ill. He was shot down as he emerged from the burning building in which the last of four Anti-slavery printing-presses perished at the hands of infuriated pro-slavery rioters. Lovejoy, though a clergyman, had determined to protect his rights of free speech under the Constitutional forms of self-defense. He and his friends had armed themselves according to law, and were under the protection of the Mayor of the town. They thus stood like the embat-

tled farmer at Lexington,— nay, more strongly, for these men were not Revolutionists, but peaceful citizens resisting illegal violence. Lovejoy was ruthlessly shot down by a shower of bullets from the street. Here was something that the average American could understand. It was not expressed in biblical language, nor did it come from a saint; but it spoke to the fighting instinct in the common man.

Nothing except John Brown's Raid ever sent such a shock across the continent, or so stirred the North to understand and to resist the advance of slavery as Lovejoy's murder. The Abolitionists of Boston immediately sought Faneuil Hall, which was at first refused. Dr. Channing, heading the free-speech movement, joined with the Abolitionists in claiming the right to use the Hall. It was felt that the great public was behind this claim: the use of the Hall was granted. There followed that meeting to which the dazzling eloquence of Wendell Phillips has given immortality. It was a free-speech, not an Abolition meeting, its object being to protest against Lovejoy's murder as a crime against the statutory right of free speech.

We see here a very different situation

from the state of things at the Faneuil Hall Pro-slavery meeting of 1835, when slavery had hired the Hall and held the floor. At the Lovejoy meeting freedom had hired the Hall and held the floor. Nevertheless the meeting was to some extent packed by the Pro-slavery element who hoped to stampede it in favor of the South. Phillips was an unknown young lawyer, the scion of a very distinguished family, and he had gone to the meeting without any intention of taking part in its proceedings. He was drawn into the fray by the extraordinary speech of James T. Austin, attorney-general of Massachusetts and leader of the conservatives. Austin declared that Lovejoy was not only presumptuous and imprudent while he lived, but that he "died as the fool dieth." He compared the murderers of Lovejoy with the men who destroyed the tea in Boston harbor, and said that wherever the Abolition fever raged there were mobs and murders. Austin was vociferously applauded and there was some prospect that the whole meeting would break up in a riot. Phillips had great difficulty in getting the attention of the audience. "Mr. Chairman," he said, "we have met for the freest discussion of these resolutions and the events which

gave rise to them." (Cries of "question," "hear him," "go on," "no gagging"—etc.) "I hope I shall be permitted to express my surprise at the sentiments of the last speaker,— surprise not only at such sentiments from such a man, but at the applause they have received within these walls. A comparison has been drawn between the events of the Revolution and the tragedy at Alton. We have heard it asserted here, in Faneuil Hall, that Great Britain had a right to tax the Colonies; and we have heard the mob at Alton, the drunken murderers of Lovejoy, compared to those patriot fathers who threw the tea overboard! (Great applause.) Fellow-citizens, is this Faneuil Hall doctrine?" ("No, no.") After giving a clear exposition of the difference between the riot at Alton and the Boston Tea Party, Phillips continued: "Sir, when I heard the gentleman lay down principles which place the murderers of Alton side by side with Otis and Hancock, with Quincy and Adams, I thought those pictured lips (pointing to the portraits in the Hall) would have broken into voice to rebuke the recreant American,— the slanderer of the dead. (Great applause and counter applause.) The gentleman said that he should

sink into insignificance if he dared not gainsay the principles of these resolutions. Sir, for the sentiments he has uttered, on soil consecrated by the prayers of Puritans, and the blood of patriots, the earth should have yawned and swallowed him up." (Applause and hisses, with cries of "Take that back!") The uproar became so great that for a time no one could be heard. At length the Hon. William Sturgis came to Mr. Phillips's side at the front of the platform. He was met with cries of "Phillips or nobody," "Make him take back *recreant;* he shan't go on till he takes it back." When it was understood that Mr. Sturgis meant to sustain, not to interrupt Mr. Phillips, he was listened to and said, "I did not come here to take part in this discussion, nor do I intend to; but I do entreat you, fellow-citizens, by everything you hold sacred,— I conjure you by every association connected with this Hall, consecrated by our Fathers to freedom of discussion,— that you listen to every man who addresses you in a decorous manner." Phillips resumed his speech and made in this, his début, one of the best remembered triumphs in a life of oratory. His speech, though imperfectly reported, is one of those historic speeches which carry their eloquence to the

reader, even through the disguise of print. When Phillips was asked afterwards what his thoughts were during the delivery of it, he said he was thinking of nothing except the carrying of resolutions. This he accomplished and the vote of the meeting was cast for freedom: the murderers of Lovejoy were denounced.

The practical importance of this outcome to the Abolitionists is brought home to us in a letter written by one of them, a woman, to a friend in England. "Stout men, my husband for instance, came home that day and lifted up their voices and wept. Dr. Channing did not know how dangerous an experiment, as people count danger, he adventured. We knew that we must send our children out of town and sleep in our day garments that night, unless free discussion prevailed."

The burning of Pennsylvania Hall, in Philadelphia, in May, 1838, was among the last of the outrages committed during this epoch of persecution. There seems after this to have been a simmering down of the antagonism of the public to the Abolitionists, and it was not until 1850 that another great attempt, the last attempt, was made by the united South to control the destinies of the North.

VI

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

It seems to be always the case in human affairs that conditions grow better and worse at the same time. An evil reaches its climax at the very moment that the corrective reform is making a hidden march upon it from an unexpected quarter. And so this epoch of crisis in mob violence against Abolition must be recorded as the epoch during which Abolition passed from the stage of moral agitation into the arena of practical politics. The Anti-slavery men had begun by heckling the clergy; they divided up the country into districts and sent their dreaded emissaries with lists of questions which the parsons had to answer. This process rent the churches, or rather it revealed the fact that the churches were Pro-slavery. In like manner the questioning of all candidates for office was taken up by the Abolitionists. In the year 1840 there were two thousand Anti-slavery Societies with a membership of

two hundred thousand. It is apparent that the political parties at the North were about to feel the same disruptive power run through their vitals that the churches had felt.

If you take up a history of the United States, or the biography of a statesman of this time, you will find that the author only begins to deal with Abolition in about the year 1840, that is, after it has reached the political stage. He writes perhaps a few pages, as Mr. Rhodes does, about the rise of the movement, taking for granted that the reader knows how Abolition got started, and why it was able so soon to overshadow all other questions. The same thing occurs in the history of the rise of Christianity; with this difference,— that the early stages of Christianity are involved in obscurity; whereas the activities of the early years of Abolition are recorded in accessible and thrilling books. The historian, as a general rule, gives us only the history of politics. He seems not to be interested in the beginnings of things. And yet, those beginnings are the seed. The beginnings of any movement,— the epoch when it is in the stage of idea, of agitation, of moral impulse, and before it has assumed a shape

that can be termed political,— these beginnings show its nature. In them you find the explanation of the later political stages.

The history of the Anti-slavery struggle after 1840,— that is to say, the history of political Anti-slavery,— has been well analyzed and understood, and can be traced in the biographies of our statesmen. I am not going to retrace it in this essay; for I believe that Garrison's distinctive work was accomplished before 1840. I shall content myself with a few observations which apply to the whole period between 1830 and 1860, and which are equally true of the agitational era and of the political era of the struggle.

The spread of Anti-slavery sentiment was brought about through the doings of the Slave Power. From the time when the State of Georgia in 1830 offered a reward for the arrest of Garrison, till South Carolina seceded in 1860, the education of the North was due to the activity of the South. While North and South were in ignorance of this fact, the form of the reaction and inter-action between Northern and Southern elements was the inevitable form through which such a drama must pass. The Slave Power believed that Garrison,

with some almost superhuman agency, was moving upon it to devour it. Slavery, during the whole course of its long suicide, was, in its own view, striving to save itself from destruction. The Abolitionists brought into the conflict the element of Fate. The South knew that no form of compromise could bind Garrison. It felt this with the instinct of the hunted animal. It aimed a blow at the enemy, Abolition; and it struck free speech, it struck the right of petition, trial by jury, education, benevolence, common sense. Slavery began its death agony in 1830, and was driven from one step to another merely as a consequence of the nature of man. If the South could have smiled at Abolition, if it could have kept its temper and lent no hand in assisting the Abolitionists to bring forward their cause, then the way of the reformers would have been hard. This would have happened, perhaps, if Anti-slavery in America had been a pioneer cause, a new light leading the world. But our Anti-slavery cause was a mere means of catching up with Europe. The moral power of humanity at large prevented South Carolina from smiling at Abolition. The slave-owners trembled because they were a part of the thing

which criticised them. Massachusetts and South Carolina were parts of that modern world in which their heart-strings met. This solidarity between the North and the South was the cause of the anguish, and the means of the cure.

In the early days of any movement it is only the expert who can read the times correctly. The lean prophet, in whose bosom the turmoil of a new age begins, sees proofs of that age everywhere. He thinks of nothing else, he cares for nothing else. Thus the Abolitionists could see in 1830 what the average man could not understand till 1845,— that the Slave Power was a Moloch which controlled the politics of the North and which, in the nature of things, could stick at nothing while engaged in perpetuating that control. Garrison or May could perceive this in 1828 by taking an observation of Edward Everett or of Daniel Webster. But the average citizen could not see it; he lacked the detachment. His obfuscation was a part of the problem, a part of the evil in the period. In 1845 it required the Annexation of Texas to show to the man in the street those same truths which the Abolitionists had seen so plainly fifteen years before. The Annexation of

Texas was the most educational of all the convulsive demonstrations of the South.

Where did the motive power reside from which all these changes proceeded? Was this motive power the conscience of the Abolitionists? I do not think so. The Abolitionists stand nearer to a sense of justice, nearer to rational modern life than the rest of our compatriots of that time. But the Abolitionists were not the motive power; they were merely the point of entrance of new life into the community. Every stroke of his pulse, that told an Abolitionist that something must be done about slavery, could perform its functions only by flashing down to Georgia, and coming back in the form of anger and of grief. Every argument that split a vestry, or left a mind ruined was necessary. It was essential that these things should come.

The metaphysical question was always the same, namely: "How far legal argument is valid when it contravenes human feelings?" The question assumed various forms while the fire was eating its way through society towards the powder magazine; but the substance of it never varied. The whole age-long contest in all its Protean forms is summarized in a well-known

legal anecdote. Judge Harrington of Vermont is said to have told the attorney for a Southern owner who was seeking to recover a fugitive slave in 1808, that his "evidence of ownership" was insufficient. "What evidence does your Honor require?" "Nothing less than a bill of sale from God Almighty." This story gives the two elements, pity and business interest, expressed in terms of constitutional argument. It summarizes the labors of our statesmen,— Webster, Calhoun, Sumner, Taney, Douglas, Lincoln,— each of whom had his bout with the problem. The unfortunate American statesmen who were obliged to formulate a philosophy upon the matter seem to me like that procession of hypocrites in Dante's Purgatory, robed in mantles of lead. They emerge, each bent down with his weight of logic, blinded by his view of the inherited curse,— nursing his critique of the constitution; they file across the pages of our history from Jefferson to Lincoln,— sad, perplexed men.

The solution given by Garrison to the puzzle was that the law must give way, that the Constitution was of no importance, after all. This is what any American would have answered had the question con-

cerned the Constitution of Switzerland or of Patagonia. But, for some reason, our own Constitution was regarded differently. I suppose that the politics, theology, and formal organization of the whole world are never so important as they pretend to be. The element of material interest in these matters gives them their awful weight to contemporaries. When we are dealing with a past age this element evaporates, and we see clearly that most of the importances of the world have no claim to our reverence. Now when a man has felt in this way about his own age, we call him a great man; because we agree with him. For this is the test, and the only conceivable test of greatness,— that a man shall look upon his own age, and see it in the same light as that in which posterity sees it. We must concede greatness to Garrison. His early editorials upon the question of disunion show that he viewed our Constitution in true historical perspective as early as 1832.

Let us now remember some of the phases of the nightmare which, like a continuous Dreyfus case, perplexed all honest men, all thinking men in America for two generations. The Constitution was so inwoven with our social life that the conflict be-

tween the letter and the spirit was ubiquitous. The restless probings went forward at the fireside, in the club, in the shop; no pillow was free from them. Slavery covered every sentiment with a cloak. Slavery was in literature, in religion, in custom. This social, daily, domestic, discussion and heartburn was the true means of regeneration. The political history of slavery was to be the outcome of this fireside discussion. The constitutional theory which any man held was, in this epoch, the outcome of his personal struggle with evil. In other words the slavery question had become the symbol of the relation between good and evil in practical life. We notice in all this the tardiness of the political world in absorbing new ideas. The world of politics is always twenty years behind the world of thought. The world of politics lives and works in ideals which are twenty years old.

The result of all the upturnings of conscience, which went forward in millions of private breasts, was at length seen in the formation of the Republican Party. By the time that party was formed one could distinguish (as Mr. Rhodes points out), two classes of men among its members: — the men actuated by pity for the slave, of

whom Sumner was the type; and the men actuated by resentment at being ruled from the South, of whom Seward was the type. It was, however, the Abolition tom-tom that had called both classes from the deep; and the Seward class was but an imperfect, half-awakened example of the true thing. The Seward class could never stand fire. Its courage,— for the infusion of courage was the sole function of that tom-tom,— its courage was in the head and not, as yet, in the vitals. This class was subject to splendid visitations of new idea; and yet it was also subject to the occasional panic-stricken discovery that the bottom had dropped out after all, and that one must go softly, because life could not be trusted.

The abstract, inscrutable nature of the contest between Freedom and Slavery first began to be revealed to the politicians in about 1850; and men then began to feel that the whole historic sequence of things was a fate-drama. Even then, everybody *in politics* was afraid to speak plainly about slavery. It required, for instance, notable insight as well as great political courage for Lincoln to state what was known to everyone. In 1858 he took his political life in his hands, and spoke of "the house

divided against itself." His associates were scandalized by his rashness, and begged him to omit the phrase. Merciful heavens! Had not this house been divided against itself for three-quarters of a century? Yes, truly, this whole matter was a fate-drama, and in a deeper sense than Seward imagined or than even Lincoln could guess. Seward with his perception of the "irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces," and Lincoln with his vision of the blood of white men, drawn by the sword, which should repay the blood of slaves that had been drawn by the lash,— saw only the main crash of the drama. The reality of it was profounder, and the trailing consequences of it were to be more terrible than they suspected.

The intellectual and moral heritages of slavery are with us still. The timidity of our public life and of our private conversation is a tradition from those times, which fifty years of freedom have not sufficed to efface. The morbid sensitiveness of the American to new political ideas has been a mystery to Europe. We cannot bear to hear a proposition plainly put; — or let me say, we are only recently beginning to cast off our hothouse condition, and to bear the

sun and wind of the natural world. I do not know anything which measures the timidity of the American nation better than the moderation of Lincoln's speeches, a moderation which he was obliged to adopt in order to be listened to. He was always in danger of showing his heart; he must avoid the taint of Abolition, the suspicion of any attack upon the Constitution. He must step gingerly and remember what part of the State of Illinois he is in at the moment. Even when the war breaks out Lincoln is obliged to invent a way of looking at that war which shall place the Union cause in a popular light. He is obliged to pretend that the war is not primarily about slavery at all. He is obliged to speak about the war in such a way as would be incomprehensible to any one who is not a close student of our conditions. He must remember the Border States.

Here was a war over slavery which had been visibly brewing for more than a lifetime. The Anti-slavery party comes into power; the Slave States revolt and the question is whether the Government shall prosecute a war and extinguish slavery,—or not. This is the way in which the educated foreigner viewed the matter, and he

was right. There were, however, in the Northern and Border States, many educated Americans who had from their cradles been taught to regard slavery as a thing almost sacred,— a thing which could not rightfully become a cause of war between the States. Therefore great caution had to be used in making any popular statement of the matter. This war must be looked upon as a war, not about Slavery but about Union. Lincoln was thus obliged to befog his State papers with such careful statements as to his being *for the Union* without slavery, or *for the Union* with slavery, that the outsider really began to doubt whether, perhaps, Lincoln meant that slavery might be retained in the end. Even in this crisis no one in political life was allowed to speak in plain terms. To do so was regarded as most unwise. The misguided and half-minded man of America had been trained to believe that Slavery was sacred; but *for the Union* he will die. So long as you call it Union he is ready to die for humanity.

Lincoln, then, during the years of his leadership was obliged to stoop to the complex, peculiar, and inferior character of the contemporary mind. He was one of the

greatest political geniuses and one of the most beautiful characters that ever lived; and he managed somehow to be intellectually honest and very nearly frank while fulfilling his mission. Yet I can never read his debates with Douglas or consider his Border-State policy without being struck by the technical nature of all our history. One of Lincoln's chief interests in life, from early manhood onward, lay in emancipation. This he could not say and remain in politics; nay, he could not think it and remain in politics. He could not quite know himself and yet remain in politics. The awful weight of a creed that was never quite true,— the creed of the Constitution, — pressed down upon the intellects of our public men. This was the dower and curse of slavery.

The value of the epoch during which the curse was cast off is that, in reading about it, we can see thought move, and can find ourselves in sympathy with all shades of reform. Let us take an example at random, as one might take a drop of water for a sample of the ocean. In the dawn of the Abolition movement its adherents in New York State, who were responsible, educated and propertied persons,

were a little afraid of the Garrisonians of Boston. The principles of the New York group are well stated by William Jay in the first number of the *Emancipator,* and are in striking contrast to the declarations of Garrison in the first number of the *Liberator,* which I have quoted on a previous page. Jay writes:

"The duty and policy of immediate emancipation, although clear to us, are not so to multitudes of people who abhor slavery and sincerely wish its removal. They take it for granted, no matter why or wherefore, that if the slaves were now liberated they would instantly cut the throats and fire the dwellings of their benefactors. Hence these good people look upon the advocates of emancipation as a set of dangerous fanatics, who are jeopardizing the peace of the Southern States and riveting the fetters of the slaves by the very attempt to break them. In their opinion the slaves are not fit for freedom, and therefore it is necessary to wait patiently till they are. Now, unless these patient waiters can be brought over to our side, emancipation is hopeless; for, first, they are an immense majority of all among us who are hostile to slavery; and, secondly, they

are as conscientious in their opinions as we are in ours, and unless converted will oppose and defeat all our efforts. But how are they to be converted? Only by the exhibition of Truth. The moral, social, and political evils of slavery are but imperfectly known and considered. These should be portrayed in strong but true colors, and it would not be difficult to prove that, however inconvenient and dangerous emancipation may be, the continuance of slavery must be infinitely more inconvenient and dangerous.

"Constitutional restrictions, independent of other considerations, forbid all other than moral interference with slavery in the Southern States. But we have as good and perfect a right to exhort slaveholders to liberate their slaves as we have to exhort them to practice any virtue or avoid any vice. Nay, we have not only the right, but under certain circumstances it may be our duty to give such advice; and while we confine ourselves within the boundaries of right and duty, we may and ought to disregard the threats and denunciations by which we may be assailed.

"The question of slavery in the District of Columbia is totally distinct, as far as we

are concerned, from that of slavery in the Southern States.

"As a member of Congress, I should think myself no more authorized to legislate for the slaves in Virginia than for the serfs of Russia. But Congress has full authority to abolish slavery in the District, and I think it to be its duty to do so. The public need information respecting the abominations committed at Washington with the sanction of their Representatives — abominations which will cease whenever those Representatives please. If this subject is fully and ably pressed upon the attention of our electors, they may perhaps be induced to require pledges from candidates for Congress for their votes for the removal of this foul stain from our National Government. As to the Colonization Society, it is neither a wicked conspiracy upon the one hand nor a panacea for slavery on the other. Many good and wise men belong to it and believe in its efficacy."

These New York men are in a more rational state of mind than Garrison was. When in 1833 Samuel J. May begged William Jay to join in forming a national Anti-slavery Society, Jay paused. I suppose he had been reading the *Liberator*. He de-

clined to join, on the ground that the local Societies could do the work as well for the time being, and that the great objection to Anti-slavery Societies was that they aimed at unconstitutional interference with slavery. He suggested that if a National Society was to be formed, it should show, by its constitution, that the objects were *legal,* that is to say, it should acknowledge the exclusive rights of the Southern States to settle the matter of slavery within their own boundaries, and claim only the right to urge Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, and the territories.

The new Society did, in fact, adopt carefully drawn provisions expressive of Jay's idea, and Mr. Tuckerman, in his memoir of Jay, comments upon the circumstance as follows: "Looked at by the light of subsequent events, the importance of placing Anti-slavery upon a Constitutional basis cannot be over-rated. Upon the principles thus distinctly avowed rested the moral and political strength of the movement during the struggle of thirty years." It is impossible not to feel the truth of this reflection. The average American mind could only deal with the slavery matter when presented in legal form. Mr. Garrison, in spite of

his denunciation of the Union, felt the force of this appeal to law and order. He actually signed the declarations of the new Society, which put the movement on a conservative basis, and he wrote editorially in the *Liberator* as follows: "Abolitionists as clearly understand and as sacredly regard the Constitutional powers of Congress as do their traducers, and they know and have again and again asserted that Congress has no more rightful authority to sit in judgment upon Southern slavery than it has to legislate upon the abolition of slavery in the French colonies." This editorial is entirely out of key with Mr. Garrison's fundamental beliefs, as we shall see later. We have to remember, in reviewing any convulsive epoch in history, how frequently men, even great men, have been jolted forward and back between conflicting points of view. Garrison was subject to these revulsions, and was totally unconscious of his inconsistencies.

The point I would here make is that all these various and contradictory dogmas were necessary. Each one was an inevitable progression, going on in somebody's mind, and each helped to move the argument along. It is easy to see that the atti-

tude of Jay in recommending legal action only, and the attitude of Garrison in denouncing the Constitution, as he did most of the time, were both of them necessary to the working out of the problem.

There was another element of complication which assisted in disintegrating the Anti-slavery cause. As time went on Garrison kept confiding his new developments and changes in opinion to the columns of the *Liberator*. His views upon Peace, No-government, Woman's Rights, Non-resistance, as they formed themselves within him, were advocated with an incredible volubility which disquieted many other Abolitionists. After one or two attempts at schism, the more conservative Abolitionists formed a new Society which went by the name of the New Organization. With whom shall we sympathize among all these contending sects? Manifestly with them all. Let us examine the case of Woman's Rights. Women had been working in the Massachusetts Society and in the National Society from the beginning. Women were among the ablest, the most effective, the most saintly, the most distinguished, of the workers in the Abolition cause. Should

they be admitted to equal fellowship or not? Manifestly they must be so admitted. Yet to do this identified the cause of Abolition with the theory of Woman's Rights, a conclusion most repugnant to many excellent Anti-slavery people. There must follow, then, a multiplication of sects; this was one of the logical necessities of the situation.

Now there was no person in the Abolition camp who understood these matters from a philosophic point of view. The New Organizationists were struggling to keep the cause pure, to keep it from being mixed up with other causes and ideas, such as Woman's Rights, Non-resistance, etc. Garrison was also struggling to keep the cause pure; to prevent it from being diluted, and from falling into the hands of sectarians, Presbyterians, Methodists, etc. In 1840 we find the Garrisonians chartering a steamboat, and taking several hundred men and women from Massachusetts, in order to " carry " the annual meeting in New York City for his ideas. Jay seems to have understood that the confusion was past cure, though he did not quite perceive that it was inevitable. His personal course was to resign from the Anti-slavery organizations when they veered away from Constitutional

methods. He again became a free lance. In 1846 he writes: "Our Anti-slavery Societies are for the most part virtually defunct. Anti-slavery Conventions are whatever the leaders present happen to be; sometimes disgustingly irreligious, and very often Jacobinical and disorganizing; and frequently proscriptive of such of their brethren who will not consent to render Abolition a mere instrument for effecting certain political changes having no relation whatever to slavery."

Now let us take one step further and note this: — that at the time of the Annexation of Texas, Jay had arrived at Garrison's views as to the necessity of breaking up the Union. "Should the slaveholders succeed," says Jay, "in their design of annexing Texas, then indeed would I not merely discuss, but with all my powers would I advocate an immediate dissolution. I love my children, my friends, my country too well to leave them the prey to the accursed Government which would be sure to follow." And again: "A separation will be more easily effected *now* than when the relative strength of the South shall have been greatly augmented. Hereafter we shall be as serfs rebelling against their

bonds. *Now,* if the North pleases, we may dissolve the Union without spilling a drop of blood."

It is impossible not to sympathize with the state of mind revealed in these last sentences,— a state of mind to which Jay has been brought by the march of events. The truth is that the whole vast problem was constantly moving forward. Not only Garrison and Jay, but every soul who lived in America during these years held fluctuating views about the matter of slavery; and the complex controversy moved forward like a glacier, cracking and bending and groaning, and marking the everlasting rocks as it progressed. In the end, we come to see that the whole struggle was a solid struggle, an ever-changing Unity, an orchestra in which all the various instruments were interdependent and responsive to one another. We see also that each individual then living was somehow a little microcosm which reflected and had relations with the whole moving miracle; and that every element of the great universe was represented in him. We can perceive plainly, to-day, how necessary it was that each error should be made; that Garrison should issue his inconsecutive fulminations of dogma, and

that Jay should retire in gloom, when the cause entered politics. We see how inevitable it was that the cause should be betrayed and polluted, soiled and kneaded into the mire of the world, woven into the web of American life. Gradually the leaven was invading and qualifying the whole lump.

VII

THE MAN OF ACTION

In calling up the spirit of Garrison out of the irrecoverable past we must never forget that he was but a *part* of something; — we must call up the whole epoch. Garrison was as much an outcome of slavery as was "Uncle Tom's Cabin" or John C. Calhoun. He is a spiritual product; he is that suppressed part of man's nature, which could not co-exist with slavery. He is like a fiery salamander, who should emerge during a glacial epoch,— crawling out from a volcano that was all the time hidden beneath the ice-crust. It is through the hot breath of this salamander that verdure is to be brought back to the earth, and the benign climate of modern life restored to America. To the conservative minds of his own time he appeared to be a monster; and he was a monster,— a monster of virtue, a monster of love, a monster of power.

Let us not judge but only examine him. Fortunately the materials are abundant, the

record is complete. His life in four enormous volumes has been written by his children; and the children of Garrison suppress nothing. We are brought into absolute contact with all of Garrison's singularities. This biography is not a critical work: it is, one might say, a work of idolatry. Every little battle is fought over again, and every word or gesture of the protagonist is deemed sacred. The reader feels oppressed by the one-sidedness of this procedure. One becomes sorry for the other actors in the great drama: for after all, these men could not help it that they were not Garrison; they seem to live out their lives under the pitiful inferiority of not being Garrison. For instance, Cassius M. Clay of Kentucky went to Yale College, and was, as a youth, converted to Anti-slavery by a lecture of Garrison's at New Haven. Clay returned to Kentucky, emancipated his slaves, and thereafter made relentless war on slavery, thus furnishing, say Garrison's biographers, "an example without parallel both of heroism *and of the folly of attempting to undermine the slave power from within.*" The italics are mine. But why do Garrison's children think it folly for a

Southerner to agitate against slavery in Kentucky? It seems to me that to do so was right. I believe that the agitation of Clay in Kentucky somehow went to a spot in the slavery question that nothing else could have reached. It affected Garrison himself as nothing else ever affected him: it softened him. It was the conduct of Clay and Rankin (another Southerner) which caused Garrison to offer a resolution at the Cincinnati convention in 1853, in which he stated that the Abolitionists of the country were as much interested in the welfare of the slaveholders as they were in the elevation of the slaves. His habitual attitude towards the slaveholders had always been, "We do not acknowledge them to be within the pale of Christianity, of Republicanism, of humanity. This we say dispassionately, and not for the sake of using strong language."

Garrison, then, was touched by the almost miraculous courage of Clay. If there had been a few more such Southern Abolitionists, the bitterness of this whole epoch might have been qualified. It was, however, one of the stock taunts made against Garrison that he did not go South to agitate; and, therefore, these biographers reason that any agita-

tion of slavery in the South must be " folly." The four great volumes contain frequent little hacks and side-cuts out of old controversies which are wearying to the modern reader. Nevertheless, the volumes contain also such mountains of precious ore, such a painstaking recovery of everything germane to the subject, such an angel-minded presentation of the blind side of Garrison, with the record of things said against him,— that the reader is left with nothing but gratitude to these children who are so like the father that their very deficiencies, rightly taken, illuminate their subject. The children of Garrison have not written a philosophic history.* But there are other things in the world besides criticism, and some things more rare and more beautiful than the critical intellect. There is praise and worship; there is reverence and love; there is the girasole that turns towards the sun and follows him from the orient to his setting,

* "Writing not without bias, surely, but in a spirit emulous of the absolute fairness which distinguished our father, we have done little more than coördinate *materials to serve* posterity in forming that judgment of him which we have no desire to forestall. In a literary point of view, we have aimed at nothing more than clearness, sequence and proportion."—Life of G. Preface xii.

ever in a dream, ever without knowing that he has changed his position, because *for her* he has not moved or changed; to her he is only himself.

Garrison was a man of action, that is to say, a man to whom ideas were revealed in relation to passing events, and who saw in ideas the levers and weapons with which he might act upon the world. A seer on the other hand is a man who views passing events by the light of ideas, and who counts upon his vision, not upon his action, for influence. The seer feels that the mere utterance of his thought, nay the mere vision of it, fulfills his function. Garrison was not a man of this kind. His mission was more lowly, more popular, more visible; and his intellectual grasp was restricted and uncertain. Garrison was a man of the market-place. Language to him was not the mere means of stating truth, but a mace to break open a jail. He was to be the instrument of great and rapid changes in public opinion during an epoch of terrible and fluctuating excitement. The thing which he is to see, to say, and to proclaim, from moment to moment, is as freshly given to him by prodigal nature, is as truly spontaneous, as the song of the

thrush. He never calculates, he acts upon inspiration; he is always ingenuous, innocent, self-poised, and, as it were, inside of some self-acting machinery which controls his course, and rolls out the carpet of his life for him to walk on. We must remember this; for it is almost impossible not to use words which imply the contrary in describing the acts of the practical man,— the man who utters sharp sayings in order to gain attention, the man who gives no quarter when in the ring.

In reviewing the life of such a man we must take the logic of it as a whole; we must feel the unity of it as an organic process and torrent of force. It will contain many breaks in metaphysical unity; yet through these breaks may be seen the gushing stream of the spirit. I believe that Garrison shifted his ground and changed his mind less often than most men of that kaleidoscopic epoch. But we must not try to make him out more consistent than he was. All politics, including reform agitation, proceeds from day to day and from year to year under the illusion that the thing in hand is more important than it really is. All the actors are at every moment somewhat deceived; and to each of

them the thing in hand ever a little blots out the sky. The agitator lives in a realm of exaggeration, of broadsides and italic types, of stampings of the foot and clenchings of the hand. He uses the terms and phrases of immortal truth to clamp together his leaky raft. The "belle response" of the martyr, the deep apothegm of the sage, and the words of Christ, are ever on his lips. Such things pass muster in politics without exciting comment. And yet, these statements of ideal truth, like the axioms of arithmetic, never quite square with the material world. They can only be felt and believed in mentally. You can never find or measure out an exact pound of anything or lay off a true mile; nor can you assign any accurate value to the influence of a good deed. Nevertheless, the inaccuracy which is permissible in the market-place is very much greater than the inaccuracy permissible to the historian who sits in his closet endeavoring to think clearly upon the matter.

The source of Garrison's power was the Bible. From his earliest days he read the Bible constantly, and prayed constantly. It was with this fire that he started his conflagration. Now the Bible is many things.

It is a key to metaphysical truth, it is a compendium of large human wisdom, it is a code of ethics, it is the history of a race, and many other things beside. To Garrison, the Bible was the many-piped organ to which he sang the song of his life, and the arsenal from which he drew the weapons of his warfare. I doubt if any man ever knew the Bible so well, or could produce a text to fit a political emergency with such startling felicity as Garrison. Take for example, the text provided by him for Wendell Phillips's speech on the Sunday morning following Lincoln's call for troops in 1861. "Therefore thus saith the Lord; Ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty everyone to his brother, and every man to his neighbor: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine."

I doubt whether Cromwell or Milton could have rivaled Garrison in this field of quotation; and the power of quotation is as dreadful a weapon as any which the human intellect can forge. From his boyhood upward Garrison's mind was soaked in the Bible and in no other book. His "Causes" are all drawn from the Bible, and most of them may be traced to the phrases and

thoughts of Christ, as for instance Peace (Peace I give unto you), Perfectionism (Be ye therefore perfect), Non-resistance (Resist not evil), Anti-sabbatarianism (The Lord is Lord of the Sabbath). So also, a prejudice against all fixed forms of worship, against the authority of human government, against every binding of the spirit into conformity with human law,— all these things grew up in Garrison's mind out of his Bible reading; as they have done in the minds of so many other men before and after him. He, himself, was not going to be bound, and never was bound, by any declaration nor by any document. He even arrived at distrusting the Bible itself, perceiving that the Bible itself was often a tyrant,— much as Christ saw the tyranny of the law of Moses. All this part of Garrison's mental activity is his true vocation. Here he rages like a lion of Judah. By these onslaughts he is freeing people from their mental bonds: he is shaking down the palaces of Babylon.

His age was the age of social experiments, and he was ever ready to take on a new one. This hospitality to new dogmas annoyed his associates, and led, as we have seen, to revolts, schisms, and heresies in

the Anti-slavery ranks. Garrison seems to have been assailed by such multitudinous revelations from on high that he was obliged to publish one dispensation in order to clear the wires for the next. There is one of these manifestoes which reveals the impromptu character of them all. "Despite its length," say the biographers, "the greater part of this important document must be given here." There follow several pages of fine print, concerning the causes uppermost in Garrison's mind, which evidently had filled up all the space in the *Liberator,* or used up all the ink in the office; and yet it appears at the close, that Garrison has forgotton to say anything about woman's rights. And so he calls out, like a man upon a departing stage-coach: "As our object is *universal emancipation* to redeem women as well as men from a servile to an equal condition,— we shall go for the RIGHTS OF WOMEN to their utmost extent."

In those days societies were founded for everything. No one ever paused to consider what things could or could not be accomplished through organization, nor how far the sayings of Christ were parts of one another, nor whether at the bottom of all these questions there lay some truth

which enveloped them all. Every one rushed to utterance, and Garrison more than all men put together. So long as we consider his utterances in the large, as part of the upturning of that age, as the *sine qua non* of a new epoch, we love and value them. It is only when we collocate them, analyze them, and try to find something for our own souls in them, that they turn out to be emergency cries. They were designed towards local ends, they were practical politics, they do not always cohere with one another.

The great thesis to which he devoted his life, however, was unquestionably sound. He thus announced it in the *Liberator* in 1832:

"There is much declamation about the sacredness of the compact which was formed between the free and slave States, on the adoption of the Constitution. A sacred compact, forsooth! We pronounce it the most bloody and heaven-daring arrangement ever made by men for the continuance and protection of a system of the most atrocious villainy ever exhibited upon the earth. Yes, we recognize the compact, but with feelings of shame and indignation; and it will be held in everlasting infamy by

the friends of justice and humanity throughout the world. It was a compact formed at the sacrifice of the bodies and souls of millions of our race, for the sake of achieving a political object — an unblushing and monstrous coalition to do evil that good might come. Such a compact was in the nature of things, and according to the law of God, null and void from the beginning. No body of men ever had the right to guarantee the holding of human beings in bondage.

"Who or what were the framers of our Government that they should dare confirm and authorize such high-handed villainy — such a flagrant robbery of the inalienable rights of man — such a glaring violation of all the precepts and injunctions of the Gospel — such a savage war upon a sixth part of our whole population? They were men, like ourselves — as fallible, as sinful, as weak, as ourselves. By the infamous bargain which they made between themselves, they virtually dethroned the Most High God, and trampled beneath their feet their own solemn and heaven-attested Declaration, that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights — among which are life,

liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They had no lawful power to bind themselves or their posterity for one hour — for one moment — by such an unholy alliance. It was not valid then — it is not valid now. Still they persisted in maintaining it — and still do their successors, the people of Massachusetts, of New England, and of the twelve free States, persist in maintaining it. A sacred compact! a sacred compact! What, then, is wicked and ignominious?

"It is said that if you agitate this question you will divide the Union. Believe it not; but should disunion follow, the fault will not be yours. You must perform your duty, faithfully, fearlessly and promptly, and leave the consequences to God: that duty clearly is, to cease from giving countenance and protection to Southern kidnappers. Let them separate, if they can muster courage enough — and the liberation of their slaves is certain. Be assured that slavery will very speedily destroy this Union *if it be let alone;* but even if the Union can be preserved by treading upon the necks, spilling the blood, and destroying the souls of millions of your race, we say it is not worth a price like this, and that it is in the

highest degree criminal for you to continue the present compact. Let the pillars thereof fall — let the superstructure crumble into dust — if it must be upheld by robbery and oppression."

This statement of Garrison's is, to my mind, the best thing ever said about slavery in the United States. There is no exaggeration in the statement: it is absolutely true. It is a complete answer to the Constitutional point; and makes all our ante-bellum public men (including Lincoln) appear a little benighted. They are like men who have been born in a darkness and have lived always in a twilight. They all have a slight, congenital weakness of the eye, which prevents them from taking the daylight view of this whole matter.

We ourselves to-day are so habituated to the historic obfuscation of our ancestors that we make allowance for it,— more allowance, indeed, than we ought to make. We have, by inheritance, rather weak eyes on this subject ourselves. The true cause for wonder as to the age of Abolition is not that Garrison was right, but that there should have been only one person in America with a clear head. Let us now turn forward over ten years of history,— in-

cluding all the pictures of struggle and incidents referred to in the earlier pages, and let us read Garrison's most famous exposition of his theme uttered in 1842:

"We affirm that the Union is not of heaven. It is founded in unrighteousness and cemented with blood. It is the work of men's hands, and they worship the idol which they have made. It is a horrible mockery of freedom. In all its parts and proportions it is misshapen, incongruous, unnatural. The message of the prophet to the people in Jerusalem describes the exact character of our 'republican' Compact: 'Hear the Word of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule this people. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with Death, and with Hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Judgment will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the water shall overflow the hiding-place. And your covenant with Death *shall be annulled,* and your agreement with Hell *shall not stand;* when the overflowing scourge shall

pass through then ye shall be trodden down by it.'

"Another message of the same inspired prophet is equally applicable: 'Thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despised this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore, this iniquity shall be to you *as a breach ready to fall,* swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly, AT AN INSTANT. And he shall break it as the breaking of a potter's vessel that is broken to pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it, a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.'

"Slavery is a combination of Death and Hell, and with it the North have made a covenant and are at agreement. As an element of the Government it is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. As a component part of the Union it is necessarily a national interest. Divorced from Northern protection it dies; with that protection, it enlarges its boundaries, multiplies its victims, and extends its ravages."

These passages are too direct to be called extravagant. They are appalling. They are magnificent. And they came much

nearer to expressing the general opinion of the country in 1842 than the milder words quoted above came to expressing the contemporary opinion of 1832. Education was marching, the case was beginning to be understood. Within three years after Garrison's denunciation of the Constitution as an agreement with Hell, the Annexation of Texas brought thousands of the most conservative minds in the country, including Channing, to the point of abandoning the Constitution; and when in 1854 Garrison publicly burned the Constitution on the Fourth of July, the incident was of slight importance. Civil War was already inevitable: the dragon's teeth had been sown: the blades of bright bayonets could be seen pushing up through the soil in Kansas.

We see, then, the profound unity of Garrison's whole course, and may examine with indulgence some minor failures in logic which are very characteristic of him,— very characteristic, indeed, of all practical-minded men who, after making one fault of logic, proceed to joggle themselves back again to their true work by committing a second. It is apparent that a man who assumes Garrison's grounds as to the importance of the spirit, and the unimportance of everything

else, can never turn aside and adopt any institution, without doing violence to his own principles. To disparage all government because it is "the letter that killeth," and thereafter to swear fealty to some party, or adopt a symbol, or advise a friend to vote with the Whigs is inconsistent. One who believes in standing for *absolute* principle can never indorse some political scheme on the ground that "this time it doesn't count." One who believes it wrong to meet force with force cannot retain the privilege of approving some particular war or some particular act of self-defense, which seems to him to be useful. Garrison had not the mental training to perceive this, and to do so would have involved his retirement from the camp to the closet: it would have involved his being someone else. Suffice it to say that from time to time his nature drew a veil over his theories, and so obscured them that he was able to support the Constitution of the United States, to rejoice in bloodshed, to take active part in political contests,— both in the great occasional National elections (as when he came out for Lincoln or Fremont), and in the continuous petty politics of the Anti-slavery cause.

After having supported one of these hu-

man institutions with zeal, and having justified his conduct with facile and self-deceiving casuistry, he would again ascend the mountain, the veil would be withdrawn from his intellect, and he would see his true vision once more and proclaim it with renewed fervor: the vision, namely, that no institution should be held sacred.

Let us now look upon Garrison's dealings with Anti-slavery Societies, newspapers, and meetings by the light of the foregoing views. When a new religious movement begins to stir in a community, its members are drawn together through the spiritual likeness of one to the other. They are few: they are held together by persecution: they have all things in common. They need no creed; they all feel as one. This stage cannot endure; for someone arises who wishes to hold office. The Apostles began quarreling as to who should be greatest even during Christ's lifetime. As soon as any organization is formed, there arise differences of opinion, and the era of politics is reached. With our modern ideas of club organization for everything, a political element enters into any cause whenever two or three are gathered together in it. It ought to be a lesson to us to observe how completely all men,

even great men, are the children of their age. Garrison took up the propagation of the Anti-slavery cause by means of Democratic Societies,— a means which ties up any cause into little tight knots as it goes along, much as certain forms of crochet work progress by adding little groups of hard knots to other groups of hard knots. The machinery of his movement made vigilance essential. He might be outvoted, his newspaper might be taken from him, his control might be destroyed at any juncture. He is obliged, at intervals, to throw himself into the intrigue of Anti-slavery government, with the words of Moses on his lips and some vote-getting, hall-packing device in his mind. This was not true of the earliest years of the movement; but came about through the mighty logic of natural law as the movement spread.

Persecution purifies any new religion. As the wave of persecution which had held the Abolitionists together from 1830 to 1837 began to subside, quarrels broke out. It was not until 1850 when the triumph of the Slave Power in the passage of the Compromise Bill, gave rise to a new and short persecution, that the Anti-slavery people enjoyed again a short period of unity and peace. The inevitable quarrels over creed and

dogma set in in 1839. Anti-slavery developed a complex and bitter political activity. This is the epoch of mutual proscriptions. The purity of the faith is ever at stake, New Organization is branded by Old Organization "as the worst form of pro-slavery." The *Tocsin of Liberty* maintained: "The simple truth is, the American A. S. Society has linked itself to pro-slavery, to get friends — and, like the Colonization Society, it has become an obstacle to progress which must be removed." Mr. Garrison reported from the business committee, "that we cannot regard any man as a consistent Abolitionist who, while holding to the popular construction of the Constitution, makes himself a party to that instrument, by taking any office under it requiring an oath, or voting for its support."

We can see to-day that it was through these very struggles that the new thought was penetrating the community. It is at first through the multiplication of new agencies, and later through an attack upon existing agencies, and an absorption into the older organs of society, that new thought always sinks and spreads, touching and changing society both visibly and invisibly. This process is inevitable, but Garrison

quarreled with it. He was ever wanting to keep the faith pure. He saw that no one else cared so much about the subject as he himself did; and he thought that he must keep the precious ichor from pollution. As late as 1857, he moaned that if it had not been for the split in the Anti-slavery ranks in 1840, slavery might have been abolished before then. It was not given to him to see that he could have kept himself and all his following clear of all entanglements, and could have exerted the maximum of influence with the minimum of effort, if he had simply formed no organization, but had merely taken in subscriptions for the cause, in his own name, and to do with as he pleased. His organization and his *Liberator* were in any case, and always, mere personal organs of his own: they followed his mental vagaries, they stuck to him, they were himself; and this same result could have been accomplished with infinite heart's ease instead of infinite heart's anguish, had Garrison but seen how to do it. In adopting a formal organization he was adopting part of the very element that his thought rejected: he was fighting the cause of no-government by means of a "machine;" he was supporting the spirit by votes.

Hence Garrison's share in all the wearisome, little, and at times, degraded bickering between Anti-slavery Societies; hence much personal vilification and heated talk over trifles. We see here also that these defects in Garrison proceed from a want of philosophic continuity of thought. Philosophic insight he had, but philosophic continuity he had not. There came a time in the forties when he seems to have half-perceived the nature of his own mission,—to have half-seen, at least for a moment, that there were to be no simon-pure Abolitionists except himself, and that his function was to influence the world from where he stood. This insight was probably the result of watching the same phenomena occur again and again, of seeing his Cause move constantly forward through an infinite series of failures: "As fast as we, the Old Organization, make Abolitionists, the new converts run right into the Liberty Party, and become almost wholly hostile to us. This results from the strong leaning of our National character to politics. . . . It is disheartening to see that every blow we strike thus tells in a degree against ourselves, and yet duty bids us keep on striking." It is Wendell Phillips who in this passage is ac-

curately describing the operation of a great law of influence, and who yet seems to see in it merely evidence of human perversity. Later on, and especially during the war, Garrison became reconciled to that law, which his own life had ever blindly obeyed and exemplified.

I must now speak of the matter of strong language. The prophet, great or small, is not so much an individual, as a part of the consciousness of all men. He acts in a particular way upon the force of life, just as a prism acts in a particular way upon light. He is formed by pressure of some sort, and appears at critical times, just as a prism is created by pressure in the womb of the mountain. His understanding of his own function is uncertain, and there have been many plain-minded prophets who could suffer martyrdom, but not explain. I cannot find that even Socrates exactly understood the theory of agitation. The world sometimes thinks of these men as stupid people who know not what they would be at. We should think of them as spirits who enact a lesson rather than as moralists who read a lecture. Let every man carry home what he can from the auto-da-fé. The prophets are hot volcanic lava, rolling out of some

hidden furnace,— which is really a distributive furnace, and overflows to a lesser degree in other men.

The ærolites which fall in Terra del Fuego show much the same chemical nature as those of Iceland. So of these accusing, flaming ærolites of politics. The Jewish prophet is the most soft-hearted of them all, and it is to this variety that Garrison belongs. These men see the suffering of the world, and they see or feel the relation between the suffering of one man and the selfishness of the next. The greatest of them all speaks thus:

"For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

"But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye

them that are entering to go in. Woe unto ye Scribes and Pharisees, hyprocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall shall swear by the gold of the temple he is a debtor!

"Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? Woe unto ye scribes and Pharsiees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done and not leave the other undone. Woe unto ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto

yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The tone of these denunciations is not an accidental characteristic of Christ's. It is an organic product, a concomitant of the

hottest, most personal love of men that has ever been known upon the earth. Here then is an outpouring of lava. Vainly might we call this passion, idle, unphilosophical, lacking in courtesy; or say that it fails to distinguish between the sinner and the sin. Granted: granted. Yet this is the way a man speaks who feels as Christ felt. If Christ's way of feeling be right, there is something right about his mode of expression. Somewhere, somehow, this heat is valuable. In some sense these whirling words are true, just, adequate and scientific. They do something which nothing else will do. You say there is evil in them. You are mistaken: there is no evil in them: there is nothing uncharitable in them. They are the terrible music of social agony. You would speak thus yourself, could you see as clearly, feel as keenly, as did Christ. Your calmness is only possible because your heart is cold, or your eyes dim.

Let us now remember what mild gentlemen those Pharisees were, to whom Christ used such strong language. How inoffensive their vices,—a little usury, some business villainy, perhaps, a good deal of conventional hypocrisy, front pews in church, public charity-giving. That old Jewish so-

ciety was probably the most moral society that ever existed. If we consider its thousand years of prophets, its literature of ethics and of devotion, its popular passion for theology, its passion for those discussions which went on constantly in temple and market-place, and which show a deeper clutch upon truth than Athens at her best could show, — if we consider what sort of men those Scribes and Pharisees probably were, we shall have to confess that Christ's rebuke fell on men whose faults were mild compared to the atrocities visible in the modern world. Examine the morning newspaper and you will find fiendish cruelties unknown in Judea.

At the back of the prophet's emotion is his vision of a relation between innocent suffering and half-innocent selfishness. If you should see a man being burned alive by respectable rate-payers, you would cry out, you,— yet not you but something in you,— would burst into agonized protest, accusing those rate-payers; and your language would be harsh. Such is the explanation of the strong language of Anti-slavery. The Abolitionists were the only people in the country who effectually saw what was going on. They saw the slave-block, they saw the child

reft from the mother, they saw the floggings and the despair. A hundred volumes might be compiled out of old newspapers by culling advertisements like the following from the *Charleston Courier* in 1825:

"Twenty dollars reward,—ran away from the subscriber, on the 14th instant, a negro girl named Molly. She is 16 or 17 years of age, slim made, lately branded on her left cheek, thus, 'R,' and a piece is taken off her left ear on the same side; the same letter is branded on the inside of both her legs.

"ABNER ROSS,
"Fairfield District, S. C."

Let any serious-minded man read a few pages of the Key to "Uncle Tom's Cabin," or of Theodore D. Weld's book on American Slavery, before he decides to discountenance strong language. The people of the South did not know about the horrors of slavery, and taught their children not to see them; they glossed them over, as the inevitable unpleasantnesses of life are always glossed over. John S. Wise was a typical child of the South, save that he had a Northern mother. He was the son of Henry A. Wise, the famous Governor of Virginia, and he has given us a book of memoirs, "The

End of An Era," which will be read as long as the Civil War is remembered. John S. Wise had never heard of a slave-auction, till a Northern uncle, whom he met or visited in Philadelphia, took him to see " Uncle Tom's Cabin " on the stage. This was in the fifties, and when John S. Wise was a young lad. On returning to Richmond he visited a slave-auction, and was as much horrified as a Northern boy would have been. The horrors of slavery were unknown to the South, and ten times more unknown to the North, when the Abolitionists discovered them.

I have noticed in recent years one or two denunciations of business wickedness, in which a fierce invective seemed to tear the skin from the victim's body. One writer pictured the descent of disease upon the bad man,— how his hair fell from his scalp. Now in all these cases,— in the case of Christ, of the Abolitionists, and of the denouncers of business wickedness,— the delicate mind is shocked. It is shocked because it reads in cold blood what is merely the instinctive expression of hot feeling. It sees malice where there is no malice The truth is that instinctive expression does something which philosophic analysis can-

not do: it reaches the soul, it raises the temperature and lets in light. The danger of denunciation lies in the temptation to use denunciation as a method of reform. The spontaneous cry of pity ought never to be transformed into a lash; nor should the flames of righteous indignation be exploited politically, and used to cook up reform. There is nothing of this kind in the New Testament, but there was a good deal of it in Anti-slavery history. Garrison made a method of personal vilification; he would cover the wicked with "thick infamy." He was a gadfly and a fury in his own conception. His utterances are not always, like Christ's, lyrical utterances; they are calculated attacks. This is hardly a matter, however, upon which one can make a general statement that will cover all cases. The particular thing uttered by Garrison must, in each case, be considered by itself. There are moments when Garrison is inspired. His faith is perfect. In reviewing the first year of the *Liberator's* activity, he wrote: "Last year I felt as if I were fighting single-handed against the great enemy; now I see around me a host of valiant warriors, armed with weapons of an immortal temper, whom nothing can daunt, and who

are pledged to the end of the contest. The number is increasing with singular rapidity. The standard which has been lifted up in Boston is attracting the gaze of the nation, and inspiring the drooping hearts of thousands with hope and courage.

"As for myself, whatever may be my fate — whether I fall in the spring-time of manhood by the hand of the assassin, or be immured in a Georgia cell, or be permitted to live to a ripe old age — I know that the success of your cause depends nothing upon my existence. I am but as a drop in the ocean, which, if it be separated, cannot be missed. My own faith is strong — my vision, clear — my consolation, great. 'Who art thou O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it!'" Surely this is beautiful: it is inspired; it is unconscious.

The following description of the Colonization Society seems to me to be truly Hebraic in its celestial rage,— "Upon this pamphlet I shall be willing to stake my reputation for honesty, prudence, benevolence, truth, and sagaciousness. If I do not prove the Colonization spirit to be a creature without heart, without brains, eyeless, unnatural, hypocriti-

cal, relentless, unjust, then nothing is capable of demonstration." The reader may turn over Garrison's utterances and pick out the lyrical from the political by the light of his own feeling. In doing so he will find himself forgiving more, the more he becomes acquainted with Garrison's world. The following words about Henry Clay seem cruel: "Henry Clay — with one foot in the grave, and just ready to have body and soul cast into Hell — as if eager to make his damnation doubly sure, rises in the United States Senate and proposes an inquiry into the expediency of passing yet another law, by which every one who shall dare peep or mutter against the execution of the Fugitive Slave Law shall have his life crushed out."

When we learn, however, that the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 provided that the negro in Massachusetts might be identified through the mere affidavit of the slaveholder agent; that the slave could not testify himself; that there was no trial by jury; that the commissioner's fee was doubled if the slaveholder prevailed; that the bystander could be summoned to aid in preventing an escape, and that, in case any person assisted the escape, such person should be fined a thousand dollars, or imprisoned not exceed-

ing six months; when we learn that modern historians have accounted for its diabolical provisions by suggesting that this Fugitive Slave Bill was intended to involve such humiliation to the North that the North would not swallow it, but would reject it and thereby give the South grounds for secession; when we reflect that the North did swallow this law, and that thousands of free colored people throughout the Northern cities, innocent and industrious citizens, were at that time fleeing to Canada; — when we remember these facts, we begin to feel that Garrison's language was by no means too strong.

When all has been said in his favor, there remains a certain debauchery of language in Garrison, which came from his occupation: he was a journalist. If a man writes all the time, his mannerisms become intensified. Garrison became a common scold,— and yet not a common scold, because his inner temper was perfect, and his subject the great subject of the age. He is ever driving his Cause, and feels he must evoke immediate response at every instant. His lack of good taste is not unconnected with his weakness in abstract thinking. To him Slavery in the concrete was the evil. He had not the

philosophic power to perceive that sin was the real evil. The evils were injustice, cruelty, murder, lust, egoism. These things he believed to be the outcome of Slavery.

It is not, however, the harshness of language that we are quarreling with. What displeases us in Garrison is the element of policy, the *wholesale* element in his method. But let us beware lest in straining at a gnat we swallow a camel; and let us remember that what is offensive to us, physicked the nation. The young Garrison, the man of twenty-four, when he discovered Immediate Emancipation, was the vortex of an unseen whirlpool. Through his brain spun the turbillion. Something was to break forth; for the power was bursting its envelope. The flood issued in the form in which we know it,— with purposed vilification, with excoriating harshness, with calculated ferocity. Only in this manner could it issue: the dam could hold the flood no longer, nor lift it into poetic expression.

If you take the great political agitators of the world like Luther, Calvin, Savonarola, Garibaldi, or certain of the English church reformers, you will find that these men always live under a terrible strain, and they generally give way somewhere. No one can

imagine how fierce is the blast upon a man's nervous system, when he stands in the midst of universal antagonism, solitary and at bay. The continuousness of the trial is apt to wear upon the character of reformers. Through vanity, or love of power, or through sheer nervous exhaustion, they become guilty of cruelty or tainted with ambition. There is generally something to forgive in the history of such men. Now Garrison is almost perfect: he is perfect in his lack of personal ambition, in his indifference to power, in his courage, his faith, his persistence, his benevolence. When he breaks down it is in driblets, and every day,— in the bad taste and self-indulgence of a disgusting rhetoric, in his inability to "shut up" about anything, in his use of the personal pronoun. Through these channels his nervous exhaustion is worked off, and the inner heart of the creature is left free from the great temptations.

All this armor of language was the paraphernalia of the arena, which was, as it were, handed to Garrison from without,— from on high, from within. He puts it on, and enters the lists: he puts it off, and takes supper with his family. As for the kind of man which he really was, the testimony is

universal and uniform. I copy one or two phrases almost at random, from among the innumerable descriptions of him. Richard D. Webb, an Irish Abolitionist, and a very old friend of all the Anti-slavery people, wrote: "I . . . spent three weeks with the Garrisons in Paris and Switzerland. It was a time of intense enjoyment, for I exceedingly liked my companions. . . . As to Mr. Garrison himself, he is the most delightful man I have ever known — magnanimous, generous, considerate, and, as far as I can see, every way morally excellent. I can perceive that he has large faith, is very credulous, is not deeply read, and has little of the curiosity or thirst for knowledge which educated people are prone to. But, take him for all in all, I know no such other man. His children are most affectionate and free with him — yet they have their own opinions and express them freely, even when they differ most widely from his. . . . People who travel together have an excellent opportunity of knowing and testing one another. . . . I have never on the whole known a man who bears to be more thoroughly known, or is so sure to be loved and reverenced."

Harriet Martineau has left us a record of

her first impressions in all their freshness:—
"At ten o'clock he came, accompanied by his introducer. His aspect put to flight in an instant what prejudices his slanderers had raised in me. I was wholly taken by surprise. It was a countenance glowing with health, and wholly expressive of purity, animation, and gentleness. I did not wonder at the citizen who, seeing a print of Garrison at a shop window without a name to it, went in and bought it, and framed it as the most saintlike of countenances. The end of the story is, that when the citizen found whose portrait he had been hanging up in his parlor, he took the print out of the frame and huddled it away."

The lion and the lamb dwelt together in Garrison; but the lion was a peculiar lion, he was never really in control of Garrison, as the lion in Luther was sometimes in control of Luther. The following anecdote from Mr. May's reminiscences gives us a glimpse of the social side of Garrison and shows the perplexities into which his methods of agitation naturally led the public. The scene is upon a steamboat.

"There was much earnest talking by other parties beside our own. Presently a gentleman turned from one of them to me and

said, 'What, sir, are the Abolitionists going to do in Philadelphia?' I informed him that we intended to form a National Anti-slavery Society. This brought from him an outpouring of the commonplace objections to our enterprise, which I replied to as well as I was able. Mr. Garrison drew near, and I soon shifted my part of the discussion into his hands, and listened with delight to the admirable manner in which he expounded and maintained the doctrines and purposes of those who believed with him that the slaves — the blackest of them — were men, entitled as much as the whitest and most exalted men in the land to their liberty, to a residence here, if they chose, and to acquire as much wisdom, as much property, and as high a position as they may.

"After a long conversation, which attracted as many as could get within hearing, the gentleman said, courteously: 'I have been much interested, sir, in what you have said, and in the exceedingly frank and temperate manner in which you have treated the subject. If all Abolitionists were like you, there would be much less opposition to your enterprise. But, sir, depend upon it, that hair-brained, reckless, violent fanatic, Garrison will damage, if he does not shipwreck,

any cause.' Stepping forward, I replied, 'Allow me, sir, to introduce you to Mr. Garrison, of whom you entertain so bad an opinion. The gentleman you have been talking with is he.'"

The gayety of temperament and a certain bubbling power of enjoyment which Garrison possessed he shared with all, or almost all, the Abolitionists; their work made them happy. "I have seen him intimately," said Wendell Phillips, "for thirty years, while raining on his head was the hate of the community, when by every possible form of expression malignity let him know that it wished him all sorts of harm. I never saw him unhappy. I never saw the moment that serene abounding faith in the rectitude of his motive, the soundness of his method, and the certainty of success did not lift him above all possibility of being reached by any clamor about him."

VIII

THE RYNDERS MOB

THE Anti-slavery meeting at the Broadway Tabernacle on May 7, 1851, which goes by the name of the Rynders Mob, has an interest quite beyond the boundaries of its epoch. It gives an example of how any disturbance that arises in a public meeting ought to be handled by the managers of the meeting. It has a lesson for all agitators and popular speakers. It gives, indeed, a picture of humanity during a turbulent crisis, a picture that is Athenian, Roman, Mediæval. modern,— a scene of democratic life, flung to us from the ages. I shall copy the account of this meeting almost verbatim from the large Life of Garrison. No comment can add to the power of it.

We have to remember that Webster had made his famous Compromise speech just two months before this meeting; and that the phalanxes of all conservative people, from George Ticknor, in Boston, to the rowdies on the Bowery in New York, were be-

ing marshalled to repress Abolition as they had not been marshalled since 1835. It must be noted also that this attempt succeeded on the whole. In spite of the triumph which the Abolitionists scored at this particular meeting, it became impossible for them to hold meetings in great cities for some time afterwards. The complicity of the Churches with Slavery is now almost forgotten. Among the Abolitionists during the critical epoch there was to be found no Episcopal clergyman (save the Rev. E. P. Wells, of Boston, who early withdrew from the Cause) and no Catholic priest. The Abolition leaders were, nevertheless, drawn largely from the clerical ranks; but they were Unitarians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, etc., and were generally driven from their own pulpits in consequence of their opinions about Slavery. The Ecclesiastical Apologists for Slavery founded their case upon the New Testament. A literature of exegesis was in existence of which the "View of Slavery" by John Henry Hopkins, D.D., L.L.D., Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of Vermont, is a late example. At this time Zachary Taylor, a slaveholder and a devout Episcopalian, was president of the United States.

The situation was a difficult one for the Evangelical, anti-sectarian mind to deal with. What was the use of quoting the New Testament to slaveholders, who were already fortified out of that very volume? The effect of the situation on Garrison's temperament may be seen in the meeting at the Tabernacle. There is a demonic element in what he says: his utterance is forced out of him: it is not calculated. You could not reproduce the spirit of this utterance except at the cost of two centuries of human passion. There is a demonic element also in Garrison's courage. He displays, on this occaeion, at least two kinds of genius, the genius of satire,— Voltaire might have uttered the scathing slashes about "Christ in the presidental chair,"— and the all but antipodal genius of infinite sweetness of temperament.

The *New York Herald* in advance of the meeting denounced Garrison for many days in succession, and advised the breaking up of the meeting by violence. According to the *Herald,* "Garrison boldly urges the utter overthrow of the churches, the Sabbath, and the Bible. Nothing has been sacred with him but the ideal intellect of the negro race. To elevate this chimera, he has urged the necessity of an immediate overthrow of

the Government, a total disrespect for the Constitution, actual disruption and annihilation of the Union, and a cessation of all order, legal or divine, which does not square with his narrow views of what constitutes human liberty. Never, in the time of the French Revolution and blasphemous atheism, was there more malevolence and unblushing wickedness avowed than by this same Garrison. Indeed, he surpasses Robespierre and his associates, for he has no design of building up. His only object is to destroy. . . . In Boston, a few months ago, a convention was held, the object of which was the overthrow of Sunday worship. Thus it appears that nothing divine or secular is respected by these fanatics. . . . When free discussion does not promote the public good, it has no more right to exist than a bad government that is dangerous and oppressive to the common weal. It should be overthrown. On the question of usefulness to the public of the packed, organized meetings of these Abolitionists, socialists, Sabbath-breakers, and anarchists, there can be but one result arrived at by prudence and patriotism. They are dangerous assemblies — calculated for mischief, and treasonable in their character and purposes.

Though the law cannot reach them, public opinion can; and as, in England, a peaceful dissent from such doctrines as these fellows would promulgate — a strong expression of hisses and by counter statements and expositions, so here in New York we may anticipate that there are those who will enter the arena of discussion, and send out the true opinion of the public. . . ."

The meeting of May 7, at the Tabernacle, was a vast assembly which contained many respectable people, intermingled with whom was an organized element of impending mob. The leader of the mob was a well-know ruffian called Isaiah Rynders, "a native American, of mixed German and Irish lineage, now some forty-six years of age. He began life as a boatman on the Hudson River, and, passing easily into the sporting class, went to seek his fortunes as a professional gambler in the paradise of the South-west. In this region he became familiar with all forms of violence, including the institution of slavery. After many personal hazards and vicissitudes, he returned to New York city, where he proved to be admirably qualified for local political leadership in connection with Tammany Hall. A sporting-house which he opened became a Democratic

rendezvous and the headquarters of the Empire Club, an organization of roughs and desperadoes who acknowledged his 'captaincy.' His campaigning in behalf of Polk and Dallas in 1844 secured him the friendly patronage of the successful candidate for Vice-President, and he took office as Weigher in the Custom-house of the metropolis. He found time, while thus employed, to engineer the Astor Place riot on behalf of the actor Forrest against his English rival Macready, on May 10, 1849, and the year 1850 opened with his trial for this atrocity and his successful defense by John Van Buren. On February 16 he and his Club broke up an anti-Wilmot Proviso meeting in New York — a seeming inconsistency, but it was charged against Rynders that he had offered to 'give the State of New York to Clay' in the election of 1844 for $30,000, and had met with reluctant refusal. In March he was arrested for a brutal assault on a gentleman in a hotel, but the victim and the witnesses found it prudent not to appear against a ruffian who did not hesitate to threaten the district-attorney in open court. Meanwhile, the new Whig Administration quite justifiably discharged Rynders from the Custom-house, leaving him free to pose

as a savior of the Union against traitors — a savior of society against blasphemers and infidels wherever encountered. . . ."

When the meeting was brought to order Mr. Garrison, as an opening exercise, read certain passages of the Bible, chosen with reference to their bearing upon the slave trade: "The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. . . . What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of Hosts. . . . Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. . . . They all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. . . . Hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth; let mine outcasts dwell with thee; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler."

"To Dr. Furness, who sat beside Mr. Garrison, these selections (in full, not in our abstract) seemed 'most admirably adapted to the existing state of our country. His reading, however, was not remarkably effective. It was like the ordinary reading of the pulpit,' — and hence not calculated to stir the wrath of the ungodly.

"The reading of the Treasurer's report

followed, and then Mr. Garrison, resigning the chair to Francis Jackson, proceeded to make the first speech of the day.

"He began," says Dr. Furness, "with stating that they, the members of the Anti-slavery Society, regarded the Anti-slavery cause as emphatically *the* Christian movement of the day. Nothing could be more explicit than his recognition of the truth and divine authority of the Christianity of the New Testament. He went on to examine the popular tests of religion, and to show their defectiveness. In so doing, his manner was grave and dignified. There was no bitterness, no levity. His manner of speaking was simple, clerical, and Christian. His subject was, substantially, that we have, over and over again, in all the pulpits of the land — the inconsistency of our profession and practice — although not with the same application. . . . Mr. Garrison said great importance was attached to a belief in Jesus. We were told that we must believe in Jesus. And yet this faith in Jesus had no vitality, no practical bearing on conduct and character. He had previously, however, passed in rapid review the chief religious denominations, showing that they uttered no protest against the sins of the nation. He spoke

first in this connection of the Roman Catholic Church, stating that its priests and members held slaves without incurring the rebuke of the Church."

Up to this time the only symptoms of opposition had been some ill-timed and senseless applause — or what seemed such. And as it came from one little portion of the audience, Dr. Furness asked Wendell Phillips at his side what it meant. 'It means,' he said, 'that there is to be a row.' The reference to the Catholic Church gave the first opening to the leader of the gang."

The following is from the *New York Herald's* account of the meeting: "Captain Rynders (who occupied a position in the background, at one side of the organ-loft, and commanding a bird's eye view of the whole scene beneath) here said: Will you allow me to ask you a question? (Excitement and confusion.)

"Mr. Garrison — Yes, sir.

"Captain Rynders — The question I would ask is, whether there are no other churches as well as the Catholic Church, whose clergy and lay members hold slaves?

"Mr. Garrison— Will the friend wait for a moment, and I will answer him in reference to other churches." (Cheers.)

(Dr. Furness says that Mr. Garrison expressed no surprise at the interruption. There was not the slightest change in his manner or his voice. He simply said: "My friend, if you will wait a moment, your question shall be answered," or something to that effect. There instantly arose a loud clapping around the stranger in the gallery, and from the outskirts of the audience, at different points.)

Captain Rynders then resumed his seat. Mr. Garrison thus proceeded: "Shall we look to the Episcopal Church for hope? It was the boast of John C. Calhoun, shortly before his death, that that church was impregnable to Anti-slavery. That vaunt was founded on truth, for the Episcopal clergy and laity are buyers and sellers of human flesh. We cannot, therefore, look to them. Shall we look to the Presbyterian Church? The whole weight of it is on the side of oppression. Ministers and people buy and sell slaves, apparently without any compunctious visitings of conscience. We cannot, therefore, look to them, nor to the Baptists, nor the Methodists; for they, too, are against the slave, and all the sects are combined to prevent that jubilee which it is the will of God should come. . . .

" Be not startled when I say that a belief in Jesus is no evidence of goodness (hisses); no, friends.

" Voice — Yes it is.

" Mr. Garrison — Our friend says 'yes'; my position is 'no.' It is worthless as a test, for the reason I have already assigned in reference to the other tests. His praises are sung in Louisiana, Alabama, and the other Southern States just as well as in Massachusetts.

" Captain Rynders — Are you aware that the slaves in the South have their prayer-meetings in honor of Christ?

" Mr. Garrison — Not a slaveholding or a slave-breeding Jesus. (Sensation.) The slaves believe in a Jesus that strikes off chains. In this country, Jesus has become obsolete. A profession in him is no longer a test. Who objects to his course in Judaea? The old Pharisees are extinct, and may safely be denounced. Jesus is the most respectable person in the United States. (Great sensation, and murmurs of disapprobation.) Jesus sits in the President's chair of the United States. (A thrill of horror here seemed to run through the assembly.) Zachary Taylor sits there, which is the same thing, for he believes in Jesus.

He believes in war, and the Jesus 'that gave the Mexicans hell.' (Sensation, uproar, and confusion.)

"The name of Zachary Taylor had scarcely passed Mr. Garrison's lips when Captain Rynders, with something like a howl, forsaking his strategic position on the border-line of the gallery and the platform, dashed headlong down towards the speaker's desk, followed, with shouting and imprecations and a terrifying noise, by the mass of his backers. The audience, despite a natural agitation, gave way to no panic. The Abolitionist leaders upon the platform remained imperturbable. 'I was not aware,' writes Dr. Furness, 'of being under any apprehension of personal violence. We were all like General Jackson's cotton-bales at New Orleans. Our demeanor made it impossible for the rioters to use any physical force against us.' Rynders found himself in the midst of Francis and Edmund Jackson, of Wendell Phillips, of Edmund Quincy, of Charles F. Hovey, of William H. Furness, of Samuel May, Jr., of Sydney Howard Gay, of Isaac T. Hopper, of Henry C. Wright, of Abbey Kelley Foster, of Frederick Douglass, of Mr. Garrison — against whom his menaces were specially directed.

Never was a human being more out of his element."

The following, according to the *Herald,* was what greeted Mr. Garrison's ear:

"Captain Rynders (clenching his fist) — I will not allow you to assail the President of the United States. You shan't do it (shaking his fist at Mr. Garrison).

"Many voices — Turn him out, turn him out!

"Captain Rynders — If a million of you were there, I would not allow the President of the United States to be insulted. As long as you confined yourself to your subject, I did not interfere; but I will not permit you or any other man to misrepresent the President."

Mr. Garrison, as the Rev. Samuel May testifies, "calmly replied that he had simply quoted some recent words of General Taylor, and appealed to the audience if he had said aught in disrespect of him." "You ought not to interrupt us," he continued to Rynders — in the quietest manner conceivable, as Dr. Furness relates. "We go upon the principle of hearing everybody. If you wish to speak, I will keep order, and you shall be heard." The din, however, increased. "The Hutchinsons," continues Dr.

Furness, "who were wont to sing at the Anti-slavery meetings, were in the gallery, and they attempted to raise a song, to soothe the savages with music. But it was of no avail. Rynders drowned their fine voices with noise and shouting." Still, a knock-down argument with a live combatant would have suited him better than mere Bedlam-itish disturbance. He was almost gratified by young Thomas L. Kane, son of Judge Kane of Philadelphia, who, seeing the rush of the mob upon the platform, had himself leaped there, to protect his townsman, Dr. Furness. "They shall not touch a hair of your head," he said in a tone of great excitement; and, as the strain became more intense, he rushed up to Rynders and shook his fist in his face. He said to me (Dr. Furness) with the deepest emphasis: "If he touches Mr. Garrison I'll *kill* him." But Mr. Garrison's composure was more than a coat of mail.

The knot was cut by Francis Jackson's formal offer of the floor to Rynders as soon as Mr. Garrison had finished his remarks; with an invitation meanwhile to take a seat on the platform. This, says Mr. May, he scoutingly refused; but, seeing the manifest fairness of the president's offer, drew back a

little, and stood, with folded arms, waiting for Mr. Garrison to conclude, which soon he did,— offering a resolution in these terms:

"Resolved, That the Anti-slavery movement, instead of being 'infidel,' in an evil sense (as is falsely alleged), is truly Christian, in the primitive meaning of that term, and the special embodiment in this country of whatever is loyal to God and benevolent to man; and that, in view of the palpable enormity of slavery — of the religious and political professions of the people — of the age in which we live, blazing with the concentrated light of many centuries — indifference or hostility to this movement indicates a state of mind more culpable than was manifested by the Jewish nation in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, eighteen hundred years ago."

With these words the speaker retired, to resume the presidency of the meeting.

"The close of Mr. Garrison's address," says Dr. Furness, "brought down Rynders again, who vociferated and harangued, at one time on the platform, and then pushing down into the aisles, like a madman followed by his keepers. Through the whole, nothing could be more patient and serene than the bearing of Mr. Garrison. I have al-

ways revered Mr. Garrison for his devoted, uncompromising fidelity to his great cause. To-day I was touched to the heart by his calm and gentle manners. There was no agitation, no scorn, no heat, but the quietness of a man engaged in simple duties."

After some parleying, it appeared that Rynders had a spokesman who preferred to speak after Dr. Furness.

"Accordingly," says the latter, "I spoke my little, anxiously prepared word. I never recall that hour without blessing myself that I was called to speak precisely at that moment. At any other stage of the proceedings, it would have been wretchedly out of place. As it was, my speech fitted in almost as well as if it had been impromptu, although a sharp eye might easily have discovered that I was speaking *memoriter*. Rynders interrupted me again and again, exclaiming that I lied, that I was personal; but he ended with applauding me!"

No greater contrast to what was to follow could possibly be imagined than the genial manner, firm tones, and self-possession, the refined discourse, of this Unitarian clergyman, who was felt to have turned the current of the meeting. There uprose, as per agreement, one "Professor" Grant, a seedy-

looking personage, having one hand tied round with a dirty cotton cloth. Mr. Garrison recognized him as a former pressman in the *Liberator* office. His thesis was that the blacks were not men, but belonged to the monkey tribe. His speech proved dull and tiresome, and was made sport of by his own set, whom Mr. Garrison had to call to order. There were now loud cries for Frederick Douglass, who came forward to where Rynders stood in the conspicuous position he had taken when he thought the meeting was his, and who remained in it, too mortified even to creep away, when he found it was somebody else's. "Now you can speak," said he to Douglass; "but mind what I say: if you speak disrespectfully (of the South, or Washington, or Patrick Henry) I'll knock you off the stage." Nothing daunted, the ex-fugitive from greater terrors began:

"The gentleman who has just spoken has undertaken to prove that the blacks are not human beings. He has examined our whole conformation, from top to toe. I cannot follow him in his argument. I will assist him in it, however. I offer myself for your examination. Am I a man?"

The audience responded with a thunderous affirmative, which Captain Rynders

sought to break by exclaiming: "*You* are not a black man; you are only half a nigger." "Then," replied Mr. Douglass, turning upon him with the blandest of smiles and an almost affectionate obeisance, "I am half-brother to Captain Rynders!" He would not deny that he was the son of a slaveholder, born of Southern "amalgamation"; a fugitive, too, like Kossuth—"another half-brother of mine" (to Rynders). He spoke of the difficulties thrown in the way of industrious colored people at the North, as he had himself experienced—this by way of answer to Horace Greeley, who had recently complained of their inefficiency and dependence. Criticism of the editor of the *Tribune* being grateful to Rynders, a political adversary, "he added a word to Douglass's against Greeley. 'I am happy,' said Douglass, '*to have the assent of my half-brother here,*' pointing to Rynders, and convulsing the audience with laughter. After this, Rynders, finding how he was played with, took care to hold his peace; but someone of Rynders' company in the gallery undertook to interrupt the speaker. 'It's of no use,' said Mr. Douglass, '*I've Captain Rynders here to back me.*'" "We were born here," he said

finally, "we are not dying out, and we mean to stay here. We made the clothes you have on, the sugar you put into your tea. We would do more if allowed." "Yes," said a voice in the crowd, "you would cut our throats for us." "No," was the quick response, "but we would cut your hair for you."

Douglass concluded his triumphant remarks by calling upon the Rev. Samuel R. Ward, editor of the *Impartial Citizen,* to succeed him. "All eyes," says Dr. Furness, "were instantly turned to the back of the platform, or stage rather, so dramatic was the scene; and there, amidst a group, stood a large man, so black that, as Wendell Phillips said, when he shut his eyes you could not see him. As he approached, Rynders exclaimed: 'Well, this is the original nigger.' 'I've heard of the magnanimity of Captain Rynders,' said Ward, 'but the half has not been told me!' And then he went on with a noble voice and his speech was such a strain of eloquence as I never heard excelled before or since." The mob had to applaud him, too, and it is the highest praise to record that his unpremeditated utterance maintained the level of Douglass's, and ended the meeting with a sense

of climax — demonstrating alike the humanity and the capacity of the full-blooded negro.

"When he ceased speaking, the time had expired for which the Tabernacle was engaged, and we had to adjourn. Never," continues Dr. Furness, "was there a grander triumph of intelligence, of mind, over brute force. Two colored men, whose claim to be considered human was denied, had, by mere force of intellect, overwhelmed their maligners with confusion. As the audience was thinning out, I went down on the floor to see some friends there. Rynders came by. I could not help saying to him: 'How shall I thank you for what you have done for us to-day?' 'Well,' said he, 'I do not like to hear my country abused, but that last thing that you said, that's the truth.' That last thing was, I believe, a simple assertion of the right of the people to think and speak freely."

IX

GARRISON AND EMERSON

THESE two men were almost exactly the same age; for Emerson was born in 1803 and Garrison in 1805. The precocity of Garrison, however, who became one of the figure-heads of his day at the age of twenty-four, and the tardy, inward development of Emerson, who did not become widely known till almost twenty years later, seem to class them in separate generations. Each of the men was a specialist of the extremest kind; Garrison, devoted to the visible and particular evils of his times, Emerson, seeking always the abstraction, and able to see the facts before his face only by the aid of general laws; Garrison all heart, Emerson all head; Garrison determined to remake the world, Emerson convinced that he must keep his eyes on the stars and wait for his message. Each of these men was, nevertheless, twin to the other. Their spirit was the same, and the influence of each was a strand in the same reaction, a

cry from the same abyss. Emerson, no less than Garrison, was the voice of Abolition, and the dying Theodore Parker names him as a prophet. I should sum up Garrison's whole life-work in one word, Courage. And I cannot find another word, except Courage to sum up Emerson.

The function of Garrison was to crack up, to dissolve. He cannot bear to see two men agree about anything, he cannot tolerate assent; toleration is the enemy, toleration is the sin of the age. In like manner is Emerson a sphinx who puts questions to his age. His thought cannot be understood without a thorough pulling down of extant prejudices. Both men are dissolvents. With Emerson, this was *idea;* with Garrison, it was *function.* Garrison does, he knows not what,— he talks foaming, he cannot fit two conceptions together; but he is generally, and on the whole, the agent of dissolution and re-crystallization. Emerson has only one note. He sits helplessly on his perch and utters his note; — waits a while, and again utters his note; and he is everywhere and always the agent of dissolution and re-crystallization. To compare the relations of these men to each other brings out very vividly the strong and the

weak sides of each of them; for each seems to split the age, and show the sutures in the skull of the world; each is the key to the puzzle, and each is the missing half of the other's nature. That they did not understand one another, that there was no plane on which they could meet (except for a flash), is a sort of proof, by paradox, that they stood for the same thing expressed in different symbols.

Never in all literature has there been such a passionate proclamation of the individual as Emerson makes; and one of the few men that ever lived, who best fulfills Emerson's ideal picture of the influential individual, is Garrison. It is indeed strange to reflect that Emerson's life was given up to picturing the strong man who sheds all positive influence upon his age, and receives nothing from it, and yet to remember that Garrison's activity in real life was unsympathetic and even repulsive to Emerson.

The fame of the two men is unequal; because Emerson had about him a dry glint of the eternal, and his mind was a unity; whereas Garrison was a professional agitator and his mind was sometimes at odds with itself. The power that counts towards fame seems to be the power of vision.

A man with vision leaves behind him a clear picture, consistent with itself, easily understood, popular, enduring; and though there be but few strokes in the sketch, his thought carries. The practical man, though he have the heart of the Samaritan, and do the work of a Titan, deals in more ephemeral symbols and is sooner forgotten. There was no single contemporary whose nature covered the divergent fields of both of these men. The Anti-slavery Cause was always badly crippled for lack of a philosopher; and Emerson's influence has always stood in need of more animal life as a vehicle to float it towards mankind. Let us review the points at which the careers of the two men touched each other; remembering all the time that any age is a unity, that all men who live in it are members of each other, and that the Unconscious is the important part of life.

Emerson, after the loss of his first wife, followed by a breakdown in health and a year of gloomy travel in Europe, returned to Boston in 1833, a frail man of thirty, with a theological training, the tastes of a recluse, and an immense, unworldly ambition. To live in a village, to write in his journal, to walk in the woods and ruminate,

— such was to be his existence. The organic reticence of Emerson has all but concealed the strong current of purpose that ran beneath the apparent futility of his external life. He was indeed a man of iron; and both he and Garrison might be compared to Ignatius Loyola in respect to their will. Emerson writes in his journal in 1834:

"The philosophy of *Waiting* needs sometimes to be unfolded. Thus he who is qualified to act upon the public, if he does not act on many, may yet act intensely on a few; if he does not act much upon any, but, from insulated condition and unfit companions, seems quite withdrawn into himself, still, if he know and feel his obligations, he may be (unknown and unconsciously) hiving knowledge and concentrating powers to act well hereafter, and a very remote hereafter." "A remote hereafter," — this was ever in Emerson's mind. He feels himself to be an outpost or advance guard of future wisdom. "It is a manifest interest which comes home to my bosom and every man's bosom," he continues a page or two later, "that there should be on every tower Watchers set to observe and report of every new ray of light, in what

quarter never of Heaven it should appear and that report should be eagerly and reverently received. There is no offense done, certainly, in the community in discussing the claims of this office. It is not a covered office: it is open to all men."

Never for one moment was Emerson's mission far from his thought. His fear of approaching it, his excessive reverence for it, is due to his artistic instinct just as Garrison's clumsiness about his mission,—the same mission,—is a part of Garrison's lack of artistic instinct. With that gleam of practical sagacity which distinguished him, Emerson had resigned from the Church at the first whisper of mutiny. He was a free man. He was freer than Channing. He was freer even than Garrison for Garrison kept founding Societies which gave him endless trouble. Emerson's early and unobtrusive retirement from office shows us an amusing exchange of roles between the two: for in this instance Emerson, the recluse, knew the world better than Garrison, the man of action. But Emerson knew the world only in spots. His diary shows us a mind that is almost callow.

"Never mumbers," he writes, "but the simple and wise shall judge, not the Wran-

man and leaders for some future savage like Wordsworth and Keats whom neither the town nor the college ever made. And by them we shall all believe. Now we mean by a natural leader. Emerson's "natural thinking" leads him to ridicule the names of great men very unjustly and somewhat ungratefully. Listen like the foregoing with more like the work of a man of twenty than of thirty. The most one is the following not only the lack of sensitive, the which is implied, we must give but to perfect intellectual poise.

"I'm afraid," says Emerson in the journal, "that the moral development culminates at the intellectual, and that Jesus was the perfect man. I love a reverence unshaped before that benign name. I know more hope, more aid, more because he has lived. But if you tell me that in your opinion he has robbed all the continuous of man's existence, carried me up to the moon, or even by implication, all man's powers, I suspect my senses. I do not see in him omnipotence. I do not see in him the key of natural science. I see in him no promises for me. I see in him nothing of Socrates, Lessing or Shakespeare. The perfect man should remind us of all great

men. Do you ask me if I would rather resemble Jesus than any other man? If I should say Yes, I should suspect myself of superstition."

This passage is like the stalk of the pie-plant without the sap. But nature had gifts in her lap for the youth that penned it; and imagination can detect some sort of power even here. Here is at least a creature who will test other persons by himself, and not himself by others. The lacking element seems to be experience,— experience of persons, experience of literature, experience of emotion. He has the coldness of crystal, but also its transparent purity. You would not suspect the man who writes thus of holding a pastorate over souls,— of secretly regarding himself as a bishop and an apostle to lost sheep. Yet such was the fact. A care for men, a love of mankind, is the motive power in him.

Emerson is a man whom we are obliged to understand all the time by the light of what only breaks out of him once in seven years and endures but for two seconds. By the spark of this betrayal we know him: witness the opening of his Cooper Union address which I shall quote shortly.

The Abolitionists, of course, made a de-

scent upon Emerson in their diocesan rounds,— for they visited and proselytized everyone. May and Thompson, two of Garrison's lieutenants, called upon Emerson. Their mission was incomprehensible to Emerson, who writes in his journal: "Our good friend, Samuel J. May, may instruct us in many things." He admired May but not Thompson, of whom he says: "He belongs I fear to that great class of the Vanity-stricken. An inordinate thirst for notice cannot be gratified until it has found in its gropings what is called a cause that men will bow to; tying himself fast to that, the small man is then at liberty to consider all objections made to him as proofs of folly and the devil in the objector, and, under that screen, if he gets a rotten egg or two, yet his name sounds through the world and he is praised and praised."

Any one who has followed May and Thompson through good and evil report, who has felt the heat and depth of their devotion to truth, must almost wince at seeing what effect a visit from them produced upon the chill-blooded young parson who sat in his meager study, reading his threadbare library in the village of Concord.

We are brought to see by such anecdotes

as this that Anti-slavery was a sort of special illumination. The greatest saints lived without an understanding of Abolition till, suddenly one day, Abolition broke out in their hearts and made them miserable. Abolition was a disease,— the disease caused by the flooding of withered natures with new health. The infection jumped from one man to another. Genius and talent had nothing to do with it; learning and piety seem to have been immune to it. Emerson was no nearer to an understanding of it than if he had been a clerk in a drug-shop. He had, moreover, a dry disposition,— a cold wind seemed to blow out of him,— and the sweat and unction of emotion were always antipathetic to him. Nevertheless Emerson *thought* about the Abolitionists. It cannot be said that he thought about slavery. He neither saw nor knew much about slavery. But he looked out of his window and saw Garrison and the Abolitionists shouting in the streets. They invaded his musings: they troubled his solitude. He tries to shelve them in his mind by a final analysis; but he never quite suits himself, and so tries again. His lecture on "The Times" in 1841, is in reality a lecture upon Garrison and Garrison's mul-

titudinous causes. The rather old-maidish young Emerson was disgusted by the miscellaneous and ramping enthusiasm of Garrison. He says, for instance, in the lecture on "The Times":

"These reforms are our contemporaries; they are ourselves; our own light and sight, and conscience; they only name the relation which subsists between us and the vicious institutions which they go to rectify." This is complimentary to the reformers: they have at any rate, *discovered* the evils. But Emerson goes on almost immediately: "The young men who have been vexing society these last years with regenerative methods, seem to have made this mistake; they all exaggerated some special means, and all failed to see that the Reform of Reforms must be accomplished without means. . . . Those who are urging with most ardor what are called the greatest benefits to mankind, are narrow, self-pleasing, conceited men, and affect us as the insane do. They bite us and we run mad also. I think the work of the reformers as innocent as other work that is done around them; but when I have seen it near I do not like it better."

It appears, then, through these last quoted

phrases, that Emerson thinks the reformers are quite off the track, after all. But in the final sentence of the essay there is another phrase to the effect "that the highest compliment man receives from Heaven is the sending to him its disguised and discredited angels." So Garrison, it appears, was a disguised angel, after all. The essay on "The Times" is a glacial attempt to explain the function of the Reformer. It contains valuable ideas, and beautiful ideas; but it leaves unbridged the chasm between the apparent odiousness of the reformer and his real utility. It explains nothing: it demonstrates only that Emerson did not understand these particular "times" but was greatly puzzled by them. Dr. Holmes has said "that it would have taken a long time to get rid of slavery if some of Emerson's teachings in this lecture had been accepted as the whole gospel of liberty." "But," he adds, "how much its last sentence covers with its soothing tribute!"

Sometimes in reading this essay on "The Times," it has seemed to me as if the whole of it were tinctured with condescension;—just as the paragraph about Christ quoted above is unpleasant through its crudity of feeling. There is, however, no condescen-

sion in either passage. Emerson was the last man in the world to feel condescension. If he had had an inkling of what Garrison's activity signified he would have shouted approval. Emerson's humility was abundantly approved in the outcome. Let this be noted: Emerson was a perfectly courageous person; regard for appearance has nothing to do with the ineffectuality of his perceptions. Upon Lovejoy's murder, in 1837, Emerson "sternly rejoiced," says Dr. Edward W. Emerson, "that one was found to die for humanity and the rights of free speech and opinion"; and soon thereafter Emerson delivered a lecture in Boston in which "he suddenly looked the Boston audience in the eyes" as he said these words about Lovejoy, "and a shudder seemed to run through the audience, yet unprepared for this bold word, for a martyr of an unpopular Cause." Dr. Emerson cites this episode twice over, once in the Journals, and once in the Works, and he adds, "of course Lovejoy had other defenders in Boston." Yes, Lovejoy certainly had other defenders in Boston; and it is fortunate for us that he had.

Emerson's words of approbation for Lovejoy seem to have been carefully

weighed, and he does not mention slavery. He belonged, in fact, to that large class of people who were shocked because *free speech* was murdered in Lovejoy's murder. Now, inasmuch as Emerson was lecturing before very conservative people, even this reference to "free speech and opinion" called up before the imagination of the audience the spectre of the Abolition Cause; — and a shudder warmed the room. Even so remote an approval of Abolition as this, was thought to be very bold in Mr. Emerson.

I believe that had it not been for Garrison and his crew, Mr. Emerson would have seen nothing in the street as he looked out of his window in the years 1833-1840. He would, therefore, have turned his eyes upon the heavens, and continued to develop a neoplatonic philosophy. The thing which he did develop during these years, and while he was thinking a good deal about Garrison, and wondering what was the matter with Garrison,— the outcome of Emerson's reflections upon Garrison,— was that picture of the Just Man which runs through Emerson's thought; that theory of the perfect man, the Overman, the Apollonian saint, who accomplishes all reforms without using any visible means.

In 1844, Emerson gives us a glimpse of this Overman in an essay entitled "The New England Reformers." The essay records a lack of progress in Emerson's thought, and shows that he had as yet no idea of the difference between Anti-slavery and the other many and clamoring reforms of the day. Like the essay on "The Times" it contains beautiful ideas, but betrays ignorance of this particular matter,—Anti-slavery. "The man who shall be born," he says, "whose advent men and events prepare and foreshow, is one who shall enjoy his connection with a higher life, with the man within man; shall destroy distrust by his trust, shall use his native but forgotten methods, shall not take counsel of flesh and blood, but shall rely on the Law alive and beautiful which works over our heads and under our feet." "If," he says on another page, "we start objections to your project, oh, friend of the slave, or friend of the poor or of the race, understand well it is because we wish to drive you to drive us into your measures. We wish to hear ourselves confuted. We are haunted with a belief that you have a secret which it would highliest advantage us to learn, and we would force

you to impart it to us, though it should bring us to prison or to worse extremity."

This last passage is an echo of the admirable fooling of Plato's dialogues. But it is not in phrases like these that men show their understanding of a subject like slavery. The time shall come when the fire shall descend on Emerson and he shall tear his mantle and put dust upon his head. If you would see how a man speaks when the virus of Anti-slavery has really entered his veins, you must turn to the address that Emerson delivered at Cooper Union in New York on March 7th, 1854. It is the Fugitive Slave Law that has aroused the seer and wrenched him from his tripod. He hates to leave his study, yet must leave it. His voice is strident; he forgets the amenities, and begins speaking almost without making a bow to his audience, and while he is still removing his overcoat.

"I do not often speak to public questions; — they are odious and hurtful, and it seems like meddling or leaving your work. I have my own spirits in prison; — spirits in deeper prisons, whom no man visits if I do not. And then I see what havoc it makes with any good mind, a dissipated philan-

thropy. The one thing not to be forgiven to intellectual persons is, not to know their own tasks, or to take their ideas from others. From this want of manly rest in their own and rash acceptance of other people's watchwords, come the imbecility and fatigue of their conversation." He continues to speak in haste, making use of the personal pronoun,— belligerent, reckless. "I have lived all my life without suffering any known inconvenience from American Slavery, I never saw it; I never heard the whip; I never felt the check on my free speech and action, until, the other day, when Mr. Webster, by his personal influence, brought the Fugitive Slave Law on the country. I say Mr. Webster, for though the Bill was not his, it is yet notorious that he was the life and soul of it, that he gave it all he had: it cost him his life, and under the shadow of his great name inferior men sheltered themselves, threw their ballots for it and made the law. I say inferior men. There were all sorts of what are called brilliant men, accomplished men, men of high station, a President of the United States, Senators, men of eloquent speech, but men without self-respect, without character, and it was strange to see that office,

age, fame, talent, even a repute for honesty, all count for nothing."

Emerson next discovers that Webster (formerly one of his gods) has never said anything of any consequence anyway. "If his moral sensibility had been proportioned to the force of his understanding, what limits could have been set to his genius and beneficent power? But he wanted that deep source of inspiration. Hence a sterility of thought, the want of generalization in his speeches, and the curious fact that, with a general ability which impresses all the world, there is not a single general remark, not an observation on life and manners, not an aphorism that can pass into literature from his writings."

Emerson now has the disease of Anti-slavery. The proof is that he feels obliged to take some sort of personal action. He feels responsible to the community for the educated classes. "The way in which the country was dragged to consent to this (the Fugitive Slave Law), and the disastrous defection (on the miserable cry of Union) of the men of letters, of the colleges, of educated men, nay, of some preachers of religion,— was the darkest passage in the history." And again: "Yet the lovers of

liberty may with reason tax the coldness and indifferentism of scholars and literary men. They are lovers of liberty in Greece and Rome and in the English Commonwealth, but they are lukewarm lovers of the liberty of America in 1854. The Universities are not, as in Hobbes's time, 'the core of rebellion,' no, but the seat of inertness." We find no avoidance of the word "slavery" in this address. Every other word seems to be "Slavery, slavery!" "A man who steals another man's labor steals away his own faculties; his integrity, his humanity is flowing away from him. The habit of oppression cuts out the moral eyes, and, though the intellect goes on simulating the moral as before, its sanity is gradually destroyed. It takes away the presentiments." And finally in the last paragraph, comes a fierce, frank, almost incoherent, acknowledgment of the country's debt to the Abolitionists. "I respect the Anti-slavery Society. It is the Cassandra that has foretold all that has befallen, fact for fact, years ago; foretold all, and no man laid it to heart. It seemed, as the Turks say, 'Fate makes that a man should not believe his own eyes.' But the Fugitive Slave Law did much to unglue the eyes of

men, and now the Nebraska Bill leaves us staring. The Anti-slavery Society will add many members this year. The Whig Party will join it: the Democrats will join it. The population of the Free States will join it. I doubt not, at last, the Slave States will join it. But be that sooner or later and whoever comes or stays away, I hope we have reached the end of our unbelief, have come to a belief that there is a divine Providence in the world, which will not save us but through our own coöperation."

Happy Emerson, who has lived to be so moved! Now what is it that has brought Emerson to this pass? It is Daniel Webster's defection. Webster's defection was like the falling of a mighty tower that jarred whole classes and categories of men into an understanding of the Slave Power. It did what neither Lovejoy's murder, nor the Annexation of Texas was able to do: — it waked up "the better element." To this group, the better element, Emerson belonged by education and tradition. He crossed the Jordan along with the rest of his caste. This was just twenty-five years after Garrison's discovery of Immediate Emancipation: for these things were hidden from the wise and prudent and were

revealed unto babes. The Abolitionists had been studying Daniel Webster for fifteen years. They had seen the menace in sticks and straws; Emerson sees it in the earthquake. They had then left their desks and hearths as he does now, and had talked on street corners to any one who would listen about "slavery,— slavery, slavery!"

Now it seems to me clear that Emerson had, from the beginning, been dealing with souls in slavery. This was the vision he saw, a vision which was consequent upon the Slave Epoch, a vision of moral slavery. And the man of Emerson's imagination, who is to set free these slaves is Emerson himself. This Overman is certainly a beautiful person. He does suggest truths, — this Apollo-like person of Emerson's,— he is valuable and he is beautiful. All of Emerson's abstractions and summaries of moral idea bear somewhat the same sort of relation to the real world that this Overman bears to Garrison. They are spirit-pictures, drawn from the life, a life never fully understood in its throb and passion; yet the pictures are given with such accuracy, such nobility, such power, that they speak forever. They are the artistic outcome of our Anti-slavery period. Garrison set a great

brazen trumpet to his lips and blew; and the walls of Jericho fell. Garrison dies, and his trumpet sounds no more. Nevertheless, the small, inner, silver trumpet of Emerson caught and sounded the same note; and it continues to sound the note, shaking down the walls of inner Jerichoes in men of later and ever later generations.

X

FOREIGN INFLUENCE: SUMMARY

In every great fluctuation that takes place in human society,— whether it be a moral, a political, or even an industrial phenomenon,— force converges upon some one man, and makes him the metaphysical center and thought-focus of the movement. The man is always a little metamorphosed by his office, a little deified by it. He is endued with supernatural sagacity, or piety, or resiliency. He is fed with artificial life, through the fact that thousands of men are sustaining him by their attention and in their hope. Thus in 1858, Lincoln suddenly became the great general-agent of political Anti-slavery in America; because his brain was exactly fitted for this work, which deified him quite rapidly. So of a hundred other cases of deification or demonization: — leaders seem to be grabbed, used and flung aside by immaterial and pitiless currents of force, which had as lief destroy as benefit their darlings. Witness the career of Stephen A. Douglas.

Garrison was the leader of Abolition from its inception to its triumph. His genius, and his activity kept it a unity, despite the incessant tearing and crumbling that were the normal accompaniment of its spreading influence. "I have never met the man or woman," said Wendell Phillips in 1865, "who had struck any effectual blow at the slave system in this country, whose action was not born out of the heart and conscience of William Lloyd Garrison." There is a certain verbal exaggeration in Phillips' statement; but the idea conveyed is true. Garrison's preëminence is incontestable. In agitation, as elsewhere, the great man eats up the little man; he sets the clock in the little man's bosom by his own chronometer,— or rather, all this is done for both of them by the stress of the times. There never was a leader of men more completely consumed by his mission than Garrison. His life was sucked up into Anti-slavery. He had no attention for other things. How he obtained food and lodging for his family during all these years is a mystery. From time to time, it seems, his friends would relieve his wants, or pay a doctor's bill. He was supported by his Cause: the benevolence which he generated

fed him. At the close of the war Garrison occupied a position of great eminence; and he could have cut a figure in public had he wished it. For, although the Abolitionists and Lincoln's Administration found some difficulty in coming to understand each other at the outset, they were in moral union before long; and they fought the war through together. "It was my privilege once, and once only, to talk with Abraham Lincoln, at Petersburg, Va., April 6, 1865," says Daniel H. Chamberlain. "His face, his figure, his attitudes, his words, form the most remarkable picture in my memory, and will, while memory lasts. I spoke to him of the country's gratitude for his great deliverance of the slaves. His sad face beamed for a moment with happiness as he answered in exact substance, and very nearly in words: 'I have been only an instrument. The logic and moral power of Garrison, and the Anti-slavery people of the country and the army, have done all.'"

Garrison had no worldly ambition; he even declined to assist Governor Andrew with political advice in the days of the triumph of Abolition at the close of the war. He neglected and refused to write his own memoirs though offered large sums of

money to do so. He sank into private life as easily as if he had truly been the benevolent, self-educated clockmaker of a Pickwickian kind, whose type he physically resembled. The storm which had engendered this dragon passed over, and left behind it a placid old man.

We must now revert to certain antibellum doings of the Abolitionists which had a profound influence upon the diplomatic history of the country during the war. While the demoniac Garrison was, in 1833, stirring his American caldron with his right hand, he reached over with his left and set a-going another vessel in England, which was destined to be of enormous importance to this country. Garrison made five journeys to England, namely in 1833, 1840, 1846 and 1867, and 1877. In the first, he clasped hands with all the philanthropists in England who were, at that time, assembled to witness the final triumph of the law abolishing Slavery in the West Indies. His immediate object in this journey was to unmask the American Colonization Society before the British public, and to bring the non-conformist conscience of England into true relations with American Abolition. He visited the venerable

Clarkson, he met Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, Samuel Gurney, Thomas Fowell Buxton, and many other men and women of this kind. At the suggestion of Daniel O'Connell he held a meeting in Exeter Hall, where O'Connell spoke. Garrison was at one with these warm-hearted people in England as water is at one with water. They loved him; they doted on him, and he on them.

As we have seen, George Thompson came to America in 1835, as an apostle to the Abolition Cause. Harriet Martineau came as a traveler in the same year. By her writings, and especially by her "Martyr Age in America," she explained to the English mind the Anti-slavery situation in this country. After the year 1835 there existed a bond between the philanthropists of England and of America. Constant intercourse, the sending of money and articles from England to the Cause in America, and an affectionate personal correspondence between the most unselfish classes in each country, led to the consolidation of a sort of Anglo-Saxon alliance of the only desirable kind,—an alliance between loving and public-spirited persons in each country. As the outcome of this international union, which

was inaugurated in 1833, a spiritual alliance of private persons succeeded thirty years later in controlling the diplomatic relations between the two countries and in averting war. It was, perhaps, the first time in history that such a thing could have occurred; and the incident shows us that the influence of private morality upon world politics is by no means imperceptible.

In 1840 a good many of the Abolitionists went to England to attend a World's Convention, and to renew their acquaintance with O'Connell, Buxton, Elizabeth Fry, the Howetts, Elizabeth Pease and others. The later visit of Garrison to England in 1846, was due to a picturesque episode in Anti-slavery history. A free church in Scotland had accepted money subscribed by slave-holders in Charleston; and Edinburgh became for a few weeks the focus of Anti-slavery agitation. "Send back the money" was placarded upon the streets, while English and American Abolitionists flocked to the fray. Garrison took this occasion to go to London and attend a World's Temperance Convention, then in session at the London Literary Institute. Immediately thereafter he organized an Anti-slavery League, and held "a real old-fashioned Anti-slavery

meeting," the first that had ever been held in London. The astonishing freedom with which he dealt out blows and caresses to the British public, the perfectly popular, jocular, boisterous tone of his speech on this occasion reminds one of Luther, and shows a new side to Garrison's powers. His success with the public was great. Now it happened that there was still another World's Conference going on in London at that time, namely a meeting of the *Evangelical Alliance*, which was a union of protestant clergy from various parts of the world. Garrison and Thompson took, of course, no share in the deliberations of these clergymen, but watched their proceedings with interest. The slave question was already burning hotly in the Alliance. The contested point was whether slaveholders were to be admitted to fellowship. After much wrangling and reference to committees, etc., the Alliance decided for the admission of slaveholders. Imagine the state of mind of Thompson and Garrison! They instantly called a meeting at Exeter Hall under the auspices of their own newborn League: and they proceeded to denounce the Evangelical Alliance,— yes, they denounced it out of existence,— to the great

encouragement of the whole Abolition movement in America and elsewhere. This procedure occupied but a few days, and shows how much an active man can do, even upon a foreign soil, when he is dealing with matters peculiarly within his own province of understanding.

Garrison's personal relations with the British philanthropists can best be understood by reflecting upon his social isolation in America and upon the natural warmth of temperament in himself and in these English friends. "I did not hear without great emotion that you are returned to England, and I look forward with great happiness to meeting you in these better times," writes the Duchess of Sutherland in 1867. Harriet Martineau wrote just before her death in 1876: "I can say no more. My departure is evidently near, and I hold the pen with difficulty. Accept the sympathy and reverent blessing of your old friend, Harriet Martineau."

"I have watched his career with no common interest, even when I was too young to take much part in public affairs; and I have kept within my heart his name and the names of those who have been associated with him in every step he has taken." It

is John Bright who spoke thus, at the great Garrison banquet given in London in 1867. The voice of Bright here spoke for that whole world of liberal sentiment in England which first rose to power through the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832. It spoke for Glasgow and Edinborough, for Lancashire and Yorkshire,— for the new Burgherdom which came into the world heralding religious freedom, popular education, and the protection of the humbler classes.

Garrison was better known to the working classes in Great Britain than in his own country. "During my visit to England," said Henry Ward Beecher, speaking in 1863, "it was my privilege to address, in various places, very large audiences, and I never made mention of the names of any of those men whom you most revere and love, without calling down the wildest demonstrations of popular enthusiasm. I never mentioned the names of Mr. Phillips or Mr. Garrison, that it did not call forth a storm of approbation."

It was through all this intercourse between the Abolitionists and the liberals of England that there grew up that understanding which the middle classes of England possessed as to the nature of the Amer-

ican struggle in 1860 to 1865; and which alone averted the recognition of the Southern Confederacy by the British Government. In reading the life of Charles Francis Adams, it has always been a surprise to me to find how well informed the cotton spinners, operatives, and small tradesmen of England were upon the very point which the Governing classes were so unwilling to understand. The story of the support given to the Northern cause by the cotton-spinners of Lancashire, who were being starved to death by the blockade of our Southern ports, is among the most moving stories in history. They could not be induced to protest or to ask their own Government for relief against that blockade. They would not take sides against the United States Government whose action was crushing them, because that Government stood for the freedom of the slave. The tale resembles the story of some siege at which not merely the safety of a city, but the fate of all humanity is at stake. These humble creatures saved us. It was due to their fortitude that Great Britain did not openly recognize the Confederacy. Had the masses of England sustained the official classes in regard to the American

question, some sort of intervention by England in American affairs would in all probability have followed.

The Englishmen whose influence educated and sustained the working classes upon this whole matter were John Stuart Mill, John Bright, Richard Cobden, Lord Houghton, William E. Forster, George Thompson, Goldwin Smith, Justin McCarthy, Thomas Hughes, Herbert Spencer, Professor J. E. Cairnes,—as well as the Gurneys, Buxtons, Webbs, and Clarksons of the previous generation: that is to say they were the heart and conscience of England of which Garrison had found himself to be a part in the early days, and by which the whole Anti-slavery movement had been comprehendingly followed during thirty years. The lower classes in England saw that the battle raging in America was their own battle, and that upon the maintenance of the cause of free labor the progress of popular institutions all over the world largely depended.

When Garrison visited England in 1867 he was greeted as the Giant of an Idea ought to be greeted. Public receptions and lunches were given in his honor in London, Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and

Glasgow; and many names of note were to be found subscribed under words of welcome. Charles Darwin wrote, twelve years later, to young Garrison: "Thank you for the memorials of Garrison, a name to be forever revered." I would not cite the fêtes and ovations given to Garrison in London in 1867 as proving more than they do prove. We ought to examine the list of guests at the banquets and read the current newspaper editorials by the light of the events of that day, before deciding that Garrison's virtue was alone responsible for all this enthusiasm. I believe that Great Britain seized upon the London Banquet to Garrison as an opportunity for making a sort of *amende* for her unfriendly conduct during our crisis; and that persons attended this breakfast in 1867 who would not have been found at such a celebration if it had occurred in June, 1863. But whatever may have been the intentions of the Englishmen who, in 1867, gave Garrison a banquet, they did right to honor him; and their action gives the cue to posterity. It was Garrison who saved this nation. In his youth he gave us the issue through which alone salvation could come; and by his life he created the spirit through which that issue triumphed.

When the strands of this great web are brought together, they are seen to be as light as gossamer: the whole expanding Cosmos of Slavery may be drawn backward through a gold ring. Slavery in the North American Colonies was an outcome of that geographical remoteness which has so much hampered our progress. Slavery was a form of outrage which could linger on in outlying corners of the globe, long after it had become impossible in the centers of Western civilization. It had no legal inception in our Colonies: it was older than law. But it grew with our growth. The arrangement between the Colonies which goes by the name of the "New England Confederation of 1643" contained a clause for the rendition of fugitive slaves. Before the year 1862 there was never a moment in our history when slavery could have been abolished by the popular will. The United States Constitution of 1789 could never have been adopted by the Southern States had it not contained clauses protecting slavery. Slavery was in the blood of our people. During the thirty years, from 1830 to 1860, while the system was being driven out of the blood of our people through the power of the New Testament,

there grew up a natural illusion, that the whole matter was one of municipal law. In reality the matter was one of influence, in which law only played a part.

The American temperament had thus been under the harrow of iniquity for two hundred years. During all this time slavery had been commercially an error, intellectually a blight, in every social aspect a poison. The toxin of it engendered in the Southerner that subtle quality, known and feared by the Greeks,— an un-awed self-will. This quality is a mere inability to give way, and shows that the inner will of the man is closed to the great creative force of the universe. If he cannot let this force in, he will be destroyed by it. Nature conspires against him; humanity joins hands against him. His fall is certain.

The toxin of slavery engendered also in the Northerner the correlative sin to self-will, namely, a mean submission. The Southerner could not give way: he did not know how to yield. The Northerner could not stand fast: he always yielded. If you subtract the slave, who stands between these two samples of damaged temperament, you will still have a symbol of the institution of slavery in these two divergent attitudes of

degradation. Do not seek for the fault in conventions or in Constitutions. There is no fault: there is only a moral situation, having a geographical origin.

During all this time the stars were fighting against slavery. They fought behind clouds and darkly for two hundred years; and at last their influence began to develop visible symptoms of cure. A very small part of life or history is ever visible, and it is only by inference that we know what powers have been at work; but in 1829 it is plain that some terrible drug is in operation in America. Whether this hot liquid was first born in the vitals of the slave we do not know. It seems to me that the origin of it must have been in the slave himself; and that it was mystically transmitted to the Abolitionist, in whom it appeared as pity. We know that the drops of this pity had a peculiar, stimulating power on the earth,— a dynamic, critical power, a sort of prison-piercing faculty, which sent voltages of electrical shock through humanity. It is plain that all this conductivity to the ideas of Abolition was a part of Abolition. The sensitiveness of the South to criticism was also a part of Abolition.

There began, therefore, in about 1830, a

course of shuttling passion, which seems ever to repeat itself and to run upon a circuit. A wave of criticism from the North arouses violent opposition at the South: this awakens the North to new criticism. As the result of each reaction the South loses a little and the North gains a little. Now the relative numbers and resources of the North were, during all this time, increasing so rapidly that nothing but hypnotism could keep her in subjection to the Slave Power. And the days of hypnotism were plainly at an end; the days of shock and question were come. Whatever the South did, turned out to be shocking, and to be mistaken. Whatever the South did, returned to plague the inventor. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 was a Southern victory and jarred upon the Northern conscience a little. Nine years thereafter arises Abolition. The offer of a reward for Garrison by the State of Georgia in 1831 weakened the South; the elaborate attempts to suppress the Abolitionists in 1835 weakened the South; the Annexation of Texas weakened her. The Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the invasion of Kansas by the Border Ruffians, the Dred

Scott Decision,— each one of these things, though apparently a victory, proved in the end to be a boomerang, which operated to weaken the South and to awaken the North. On the other hand the North seemed to be protected from the consequences of moral error. The greatest illustration of this is the case of John Brown, whose crimes were at first not credited, and later were sanctified by contemporary Northern opinion.

Curiously enough, the *political* control of the South went on growing stronger and stronger while the basis for this control,— its hold on the Northern imagination,— was growing weaker and weaker. In other words, the Southern leaders always won: their cause always lost. Some Nemesis was working out. The *mécanique* of each successive step in the process was always the same. The weapon of the South was her threat of disunion. This threat seems to have had the effect of a spell upon our Northern ancestors. Disunion was in their opinion too horrible to be named, and much too terrible to be executed. The mere thought of it shattered Northern nerves. A world without the United States Constitution seemed to Northern men like a world before God's arrival,— chaos come again.

It was this threat of disunion that carried the Missouri Compromise in 1820, gave the moral victory to the Nullifiers in 1832, carried the Compromise measures of 1850, repealed the Missouri Compromise in 1854, elected Buchanan in 1856, and ruled the fortunes of the Republic in collateral matters between these crises.

The North was so accustomed to knuckling under at the sound of that threat that when Secession actually took place in 1860, — when the worst had happened and the Union was irretrievably shattered,— the North begged for more compromises: it proposed to woo the South back through new concessions. It offered another Fugitive Slave Law which should be embodied in the Constitution. The triumphant Republican Party seems to have been *stunned,* and could not believe that the long-dreamed-of catastrophe had actually occurred. It will be observed that both North and South upon this occasion merely played their stock parts. The South, through the habit of self-will, seceded. The North, through the tradition of self-abasement, begged her to come back.

Then occurred a thing which no one expected. The submerged courage, the abased

self-assertion of the Northern people broke suddenly into expression. Fort Sumpter was fired on, and every one of twenty million people received a shock that gave him a new kind of an organ for a heart. The dramatic nature of this climax was greatly enhanced by the slow manner of its coming on, by the dreadful waiting of the previous months, by the cowardice and inefficiency of the politicians, and by the dumbness of all the oracles. Garrison, at this juncture, is as empty as the prophets of Baal: he knows nothing. Earth's remedies have failed. No one is abreast of the situation. Lincoln only waits. At this moment, when the catastrophe is in the sky and the thud of Fate's footsteps can be heard, there occurred that thing which Herndon had spoken of in a prophetic letter one year earlier. Herndon wrote his last letter to Theodore Parker on December 15, 1859. "The Republicans in Congress," he says, "are grinding off the flesh from their kneecaps, attempting to convince the South that we are cowards. We *are* cowards, that is, our representatives are. . . . The South is now catechising the North. To this question, 'What is the true end of man?' it stands and shiveringly answers, 'The chief end of man is to support

the nigger institutions, and to apologize to despots.' The Senators are all on their knees. So are the Representatives. Let them shrive themselves there, and mankind will avenge the humiliation in the future. This is God's constant mode of operation. The race will pull the trigger which the individual refused to touch. God will cry to the race ' Fire ' and it will fire."

Never did the calculating human intellect more completely break down than in the whole legal history of America. Never did so much ability prove so impotent to understand or to assist a social development. Salvation came in spite of all men,— through the invisible. Courage came back with the war;— a certain great, gross courage,— mixed with carnage and barbarity as the courage of war ever must be,— yet still courage. This was the precious part of the war; for this courage was but a sample thread of a new kind of life which trusts generous feelings, relies upon the unseen, is in union with the unconscious operations of the spirit.

EPILOGUE

The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved.—Jeremiah 8:20.

EPILOGUE

THE Anti-slavery epoch presents a perfect example of the rise, progress, and victory of a moral cause. This cause was so obvious, so inevitable, its roots were so deep in human nature and in history, that its victory was assured from the beginning. In studying it, all our wonder and all our attention may be reserved for the manner of its rise, the form of its advance, and the mode of its victory.

Historians are apt to apportion praise and blame to the Abolitionists, to the Southern leaders, to the Republican Party, to the generals during the war, to the troops upon one side or the other in the terrible conflict. But such appraisements are either the aftermath of partisan feeling, or they are the judgments of men who have not realized the profundity and the complexity of the whole movement,— the inevitability not only of the outcome, but of the process. That Garrison should have disapproved of the entry of Abolition into party politics, and that he should have raved like a hen upon the river

bank when he saw the ducklings he had hatched rush into political waters; that the great intellect of Calhoun should have been driven forward by a suicidal logic into theories that were at war with the world's whole inheritance of truth; that Webster should have been now right, now wrong, or the Supreme Court now enlightened by a flickering compassion or again overshadowed by the Spirit of Crime; — such facts as these are parts of the great story, and can hardly be handled or sampled by themselves, hardly separated, even for a moment, from their context.

The private judgments which we are tempted to utter concerning critical phases or moments in any great cycle and sweep of destiny, are never conclusive, never important. We cannot know the truth about any of these things. No one can be sure that Garrison did not exert greater influence upon practical politics through his dogma of non-resistance than he could have done through an active participation in government. No one can state the precise value of the Liberty Party and the Free Soil Movement; no one can weigh the influence of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." All that we can be sure of is the great movement itself, which emerges,

winds, coils, progresses, now gleaming and flashing beneath the surface, now emerging above the surface, of social and political life in America like a great golden serpent,— a mysterious all-pervading influence, supernal, mythologial,— typifying the regeneration of a people.

The Legend is so vast, and moves at such a pace from beginning to end, that no two minds can agree about its details. Yet that Legend is at all points illuminated with the inner light of poetry and religion. It has an artistic unity, it moves like a very complicated sonata; so that we who regard it, somehow see our own souls in it, and draw out of it only what we put into it. The Anti-slavery Legend will reflect the spiritual history of any mind that looks into it; it is a mirror of the soul. It is a sort of thesaurus of moral illustration. The reason is that we were deeply diseased; we were in immense danger; we were covered with scales, and our mind was threatened. Our whole civilization was iridescent with the same poison. But we were healed, we were saved. And in the course of our cure every process and function of health was revealed.

To talk about the present is always diffi-

cult. The past is easy; but when in the course of any discussion we approach the present, we approach the unknowable. The present can by no means be brought into historic focus. If then we look about us in America to-day having in our minds some reminiscence of history, let us beware of certitude: let us touch upon what we see with merely a hint and a query. I will, then, do no more than name three shapes which I see or seem to see and which may be thought of as apparitions or as passing fancies; — the first is a kind of specter, the second is a visitation from on high, the third is a prophecy. They are namely: the Decay of Learning. the Rise of Love, and the ultimate Revival of Spiritual Interests.

The dying off of our older cultivation, which gives so much concern to all intelligent persons in America, does not indicate death. It is due to two causes, one of them being the historic, and withering influence of isolation and of commerce; the other being the present preoccupation of our noblest minds with philanthropic work. New life is at hand, though it exist in forms which the intellect has never grasped, and can never grasp. Before, however, speaking of the future, we must look back

once more upon the discouraging side of life in America—on the decay of learning.

From an external point of view, the Anti-slavery epoch can be very simply seen as the epoch during which America was returning to the Family of European nations from the exile which her connection with slavery had imposed upon her. The struggle over slavery while it lasted left her citizens neither time nor attention for general education. In 1830, we found ourselves isolated and it took us thirty years of work to break down the barriers between ourselves and the modern world. The intellect and passion of the country was given up during this time to a terrible conflict between prophetic morality on the one hand and the unprofitable sophistries of law, politics and government on the other. Our attitude towards Europe was unintelligent; our experience in ideas (other than prophetic ethics and Constitutional Law), was nil. The consequence was that the American fell tremendously behind the European in general cultivation.

Now the period after our return to social life,— the period, namely between 1865 and the present time,— coincides with the rise of modern commerce, so that we no sooner

got free from one enemy to the soul than we were fastened upon by another — and that other the half-brother and blood relation of the first. I will not try to analyze America nor define her relation to Europe. I will only point out our most dreadful defects, and this only as a prelude to mentioning our hopes of salvation.

I confess that a certain hard-eyed cold-hearted look in the American sometimes causes me to remember that Slavery was always Commerce, and that Commerce is to some extent always Slavery. Such great wealth as has been created in America since 1865 would have hardened the eyes of any generation that looked on it. We have indeed been born to calamity in America, and our miseries have come thickly upon us. If you will walk back across the whole history of the world, you will find that respect for learning has never before fallen so low as it has fallen in the United States to-day. If you start anywhere in Europe and trace your way back to ancient Egypt, you will find no age without its savants, its thinkers, men who know something of the past, living sometimes in caves and sometimes in drawing-rooms, yet always, in a certain sense, the publicists of their times. These are the

men through whom, to some extent, religion, education, and the traditions of spiritual life are transmitted from age to age. There have always been enough of such men in every age to secure popular respect for the idea for which they stand, the idea of continuity. There has been no real break in European culture. During the dark ages the most visible and most powerful influence upon popular imagination consisted in the monuments of a gigantic past. Indeed, for many centuries thereafter, the overwhelming influence of antiquity cowed the world. That element has endured in European education in the form of a reverence for the past. It stands behind every man as a sort of sounding-board in his mind, an invisible chamber of consciousness that gives resonance to his voice.

If to-day you fall into casual conversation with almost any European, you will feel the influence of these vistas of education. The man's mind is inured to thought. What you say to him is native to his soul. He has heard something like it before. He knows of the existence of the Empire of the Intellect. He is interested in the spiritual history of the world. All this illumination

is no personal merit in the individual you speak to. He has lived near to the scholar, the musician, the painter, the antiquarian, the philologist, the mathematician.

It happened that a series of misfortunes so widowed America that we have all but lost the past. Much baggage was jettisoned in the original transit across the sea, much lost during our colonial and frontier period, and finally — we were stripped bare by the pirate Slavery, and marooned for seventy years in a sort of Babylonian captivity. I think there is enough in all this to account for the bleakness of American life as contrasted with European life. I think that the emotions must in youth be fed upon a sort of pabulum that comes down out of the past,— songs, aspirations, stories, prayers, reverence for humanity, knowledge of God;— or else some dreadful barrenness will set in and paralyze the intellect of a race. The question sometimes forces itself upon me, Is not the German citizen of the second generation, who walks the streets of New York to-day, more truly a barbarian than his Gothic ancestor who invaded Europe in the fourth century A. D., and whose magnificent vernacular is preserved in Ulfilas' translation of the

Scriptures? In piety, in knowledge of poetry, in reverence, the Goth was more advanced than his American descendant. I say, the Suabian peasant of to-day seems to me to be superior to the American farmer in many of those things that make life deep and cause society to endure.

To cut loose, to cast away, to destroy, seems to be our impulse. We do not want the past. This awful loss of all the terms of thought, this beggary of intellect, is shown in the unwillingness of the average man in America to go to the bottom of any subject, his mental inertia, his hatred of impersonal thought, his belief in labor-saving, his indifference to truth. The state of mind in which commercial classes spend their lives is not that of pure, self-sacrificing spiritual perception. The commercial mind seems, in its essence, to be the natural enemy of love, religion, and truth; and when, as at the present moment in America, we have commerce dominant in an era whose characteristic note is contempt for the past, we can hardly expect a picturesque, pleasing, or harmonious social life.

Much is lost sight of, much is forgotten among us; much is unknown that in any European country would be familiar. For

instance, this very man, William Lloyd Garrison, is almost forgotten among us. He lived a life of heroism and of practical achievement; the beauty of his whole course was extraordinary, and his type of character is very rare. Had he lived in Europe he would have been classified at once among the great figures of his own generation. Indeed he was so classified from across the sea. His character would have been prized thereafter as a national possession. But in America all that the educated man of to-day knows of Garrison is that he was one who held impractical views and used over-strong language during the Anti-slavery struggle.

All this feebleness, whose evidences I have been reviewing, comes, I believe, from a central deficiency of life in the American people. It is not a thing which can be cured in the college, or in the school, or in the drawing-room; though the cure will show in all such places as fast as the great patient improves.

During the very epoch (the decade succeeding the close of the war) when our intellectual blight was at its worst, there began to appear among us compassionate persons founding newsboys' halls in the Five Points, prison angels, and police court

visitors, saints knocking at the doors of the poor,— men filled with love and pity. This new gospel of love now absorbs whole classes of people in American life, and swallows the young as the Crusades once swallowed them. I hear schoolmasters and learned men complain that their most brilliant classical scholars insist upon doing settlement work the moment they graduate. Why do the young people of both sexes take this course? What planetary influence depletes the exhausted ranks of scholarship, and makes traitors of these trained minds to the cause of learning? In their new career their old education goes apparently for nothing. They themselves cannot tell you. And yet they are justified. These young people are being governed by that higher law which governed St. Francis,— the law which he also knew how to obey but could not explain. Our young people express by their conduct a more potent indictment of the cultivation and science of the older, dying epoch than could be written with the pen of Ezekiel. The age has nothing in it that satisfies them: they therefore turn away from it: they satisfy themselves elsewhere. In so doing they create a new age. The deeper needs of

humanity can only be met slowly. It required several hundred years for the meaning and importance of St. Francis to become apparent. To his contemporaries he seemed to be a disciple sent to the poor; yet his influence ultimately qualified the art and letters, and tinged the philosophy of life of several centuries.

All these new saints of ours,— new Christians, and loving persons who crowd the slums, and rediscover Christ in themselves and in others,— lack power to explain; they merely exist. Through them, or rather through the heart which they infuse, literature and intellect will return, art and mental vigor will be restored to us. It would seem that the bowels and viscera of society must be heated first, and thereafter in time,— it may be a century or two,— a warmer life will reach the mind. These new grubs that creep out of the ground, these golden bees that dart by us in the sunshine, going so directly to their work like camp nurses, are more perfect creatures than we are, in that they deal with humanity as a unit. You and I are nothing to them. They have a relation to the whole. They are living in a beam which we do not see, they are the servants of a great

cure which we cannot give, and do not understand.

So also in regard to the Anti-slavery Movement, the importance of that Movement comes from the fact that it meant piety, truth, and love. The rest is illusion. In a certain sense the slaves were freed too soon. That short-sighted element in the philosophy of Abolition, which saw Slavery as the Antichrist (whereas the spiritual domination of evil was the real Antichrist), ended by putting Slavery to its purgation so quickly and so convulsively that many features and visiting cards of slavery were left behind in the nervous system of the people. This was no one's fault: it was the method of nature. An after-cure was necessary; and we have been undergoing an after-cure, and need more of it.

I regret the loss of the old cultivation; and yet I know that none of our older cultivation was ever quite right. The American has never lived from quite the right place in his bosom. Nevertheless if we are but patient the loss will be restored to us tenfold. We are living in the age of a great regeneration. There is hardly a man in whose face I do not see some form of it. New hope is with us. Very different is

our mission from that of the Abolitionist, though both are forms of the same power. Anti-slavery was the narrow, burning gate of heaven, seen by a few men, who fought their way towards it, paying with their lives for every step in their progress. Crags overhung them: society hated them: every man was their enemy. In our new crusade no one is our enemy. The spirit is felt in all men. In some, it moves in the heart crying, Abba, Father. Others it leaves speechless, but makes their lives beautiful through unselfish labor. Still others it illuminates with visions, so that we see men and women who live like angels, running up and down in the celestial light, passing forward and back between God and man, bringing health to many. In other hearts it has broken the old shackles of prejudice, and shown to them the common bond that lives in all religion. The churches have been growing liberal,— for the first time in the history of Christianity. Other classes of men glow with an enthusiasm for science which is becoming a form of worship for truth, differing chiefly in name from religion. It is as if a truce had been sounded in that antique war that has raged forever over creed form and

scientific theory, and as if every one were standing in silence, thinking of the realities which lie and which have always lain behind the noisy dogmas and the certified formulas of human thought. The wrecks of many creeds are being clashed together like the cakes of ice in the Hudson during a great February thaw; while the strong river bears them all forward in triumph.

Great and small, learned and unlearned meet upon that plane of common humility which is their only meeting ground. It is a period when the power and first-hand mystery of life is recognized on every side, and when the conventions and lies that dam and deny that power are for the time being widely broken down. I do not say that the dams will remain down forever. People are building at them all the time. Trade interests, personal selfishnesses are indefatigably at work like ants,— contesting every inch of the damage, inventing new dykes, denying that any permanent change has taken place.

Let us be glad that we are born in this age and within the swirl and current of the new freedom. Let us do each our share to leave the dams down, and not build them up in our own bosoms; for it is in

peoples' bosoms that all these dams exist. We must permit the floods of life to run freely. It is not from any one of our reforms, arts, sciences, and churches but out of all of them that salvation flows. What shall we do to assist in this great process? What relation do we bear to the movement? That is the question which requires a lifetime for its answer. Our knowledge of the subject changes constantly under experience. At first we desire to help vigorously; and we do all in our power to assist mankind. As time goes on, we perceive more and more clearly that the advancement of the world does not depend upon us, but that we, rather, are bound up in it, and can command no foothold of our own. At last we see that our very ambitions, desires and hopes in the matter are a part of the Supernal Machinery moving through all things, and that our souls can be satisfied and our power exerted only in so far as we are taken up into that original motion, and merged in that primal power. Our minds thus dissolve under the grinding analysis of life, and leave behind nothing except God. Towards him we stand and look; and we, who started out with so many gifts for men, have nothing left in our satchel for mankind except a blessing.

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